For Estelle

ILLUSTRATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

> Practice has a logic which is not that of the logician. This has to be acknowledged in order to avoid asking of it more logic than it can give, thereby condemning oneself either to wring incoherence out of it or to thrust a forced coherence upon it. (Bourdieu 1990:80)

The impetus for this book emerged in the heat of practice. It was in the experience of painting two works—*Reading Fiction* (1995) (Illus. 1) and *Reading Theory* (1995) (Illus. 2)—that I came to question the representationalist logic that underpins contemporary understandings of the work of art. *Reading Fiction* and *Reading Theory* were painted within weeks of each other at a time when I had been working constantly and persistently at my craft. The two paintings were part of a series. Both are quite large works—0.9m x 0.7m and 1.5m x 1.2m respectively—and each was completed rapidly in a single sitting over a three-hour period.

For the purpose of my argument I want to recall the process of the painting. At first the work proceeded according to established principles of painting practice—blocking in the shapes, establishing a composition, paying attention to proportion and the shapes of light and dark—a re-iteration of habits and strategies of working. However, at some undefinable moment, the painting took on a life that seemed to have almost nothing to do with my conscious attempts to control it. The "work" (as verb) took on its own momentum, its own rhythm and intensity. Within this intense and furious state, I no longer had any awareness of time, of pain or of making decisions. In the fury of painting, rules give way to tactics and the pragmatics of action. The painting takes on a life of its own. It breathes, vibrates, pulsates, shimmers and generally runs away from me. The painting no longer merely represents or illustrates reading. Instead, it performs. In the performativity of imaging, life gets into the image.

In the painting *Reading Fiction*, "the life" that seemed to emerge in the work was the life of Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient*. As I proceeded with the painting I was oblivious to the fact that my sitter was reading this novel. Yet there, in the painting, the acidity of the colours, the texture of the paint and play of light assumed the eerie atmosphere that enveloped the English patient:

> The villa drifts in darkness. In the hallway by the English patient's room the last candle burns, still alive in the night. Whenever he opens his eyes out of sleep, he sees the odd wavering yellow light. For him now the world is without sound, and even light seems an unneeded thing. (Ondaatje 1992:298)

1. Barb Bolt *Reading Fiction* (1995)

In *Reading Fiction*, it seemed to me as if the life in the novel had insinuated itself into the painting. The odd, wavering yellow light had come to infect the painting, whilst the ragged breath of the dying English patient seemed to make it heave and tremble.

The second painting, *Reading Theory* took a very different turn. Here Felix Guattari's theoretical treatise *Chaosmosis* appeared to transcend its function as a readerly text and began to write itself into the portrait of its reader. As the painting proceeded, the portrait was no longer exactly human but became, as in

Guattari's text, 'half-thing half-soul, half-man half-beast, machine and flux, matter and sign … a becoming ancestral, animal, vegetal, cosmic' (Guattari 1995:102)

2. Barb Bolt *Reading Theory* (1995)

Such accounts of practice raise a fundamental question. If a painting comes to perform rather than merely represent some other *thing* what is happening? In this questioning, I am reminded of the narrative of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. In the novel the protagonist, Dorian Gray, makes a wish that his own youthful and beautiful face remain untarnished and untouched, whilst Basil Hallwell's portrait of him would, in time, come to 'bear the burden of his passions and his sins' and be 'seared with the lines of suffering and thought' (Wilde 1980:78). Dorian's subsequent astonishment at the transformation on the canvas resonated with my own amazement at the life some of my own canvases have taken on. How had Dorian's wish come to be fulfilled? Surely this was impossible:

> It seemed monstrous even to think of them. And, yet, there was the picture before him, with the touch of cruelty in the mouth. (Wilde 1980:34)

Is this just a story, a fable with a moral, or is the relationship between "real bodies" and imaging more powerful than customarily believed? Does the visual image, like the speech act, have the power to bring into being that which it

figures? Can the image transcend its structure as representation and be performative rather than representational? These questions provides the central focus of this book.

A Logic of Practice?

The problem of thinking and writing about visual arts practice is a difficult one. Is it possible, for example, to articulate a logic of visual practice or does practice escape such theoretical contemplation altogether? In his attempts to develop a "logic of practice", Pierre Bourdieu admits that 'it is not easy to speak of practice other than negatively—especially those aspects of practice that are seemingly most mechanical, most opposed to the logic of thought and discourse' (Bourdieu 1990:80). If practice does not have the *a priori* logic of the logician, then what is to be gained from attempts to theorise a logic of practice?

Bourdieu's *The Logic of Practice* (1990) and Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) offer an initial framework for thinking about the problem of formulating a logic of practice. Working within the framework of sociology, de Certeau and Bourdieu are concerned with the operational logic of practice, rather than its mere products. In their attempts to articulate the relation between theory and practice, de Certeau and Bourdieu lay out the problematics of developing such a logic.

Theorists or logicians of practice tend to approach the task of theorising practice as a dressmaker approaches the task of making a garment. Using theoretical schemas or patterns, shapes are "cut out" from the continuous flow of practices. These shapes are inverted and then become metonymic for the practices they purport to describe or explain. The part becomes the whole. In the totalisation of theory, Bourdieu claims, the "fuzziness" of practice is replaced by the demarcation of semi-academic artefacts. Discontinuance is imposed on flux, time is frozen, and a system of productions is substituted for production in itself. He calls this the 'theorisation effect' (Bourdieu 1990:86).

De Certeau (1984) makes the comment, that in any theorisation, practice and its practitioners are excluded:

> Only what can be transported can be treated. What cannot be uprooted remains by definition outside the field of research. Hence the privilege that these studies accord to *discourses*, the data that can most easily be grasped, recorded, transported and examined in secure places. (de Certeau 1984:20)

Thus, in our attempts to grasp, divide, classify and reorganise the results of research into a particular code or logic, practice is *itself* effaced. In a sleight of hand, there is the substitution of a representation or data (word, graph or table) for an action. In such statistical investigations, de Certeau claims, the materials or elements are grasped, but not their form or phasing (de Certeau 1984: xviii). What gets left out is the art of practising.

Art Research

In research on art, the theorisation effect works to subsume the question of "art practice" into that which can be identified, classified, evaluated and interpreted by historians and theorists. In his article 'A Defence of Art History', Bernard Smith explains how this schema operates in the discipline of Art History (Smith 2000:6). His claim that art history is founded upon a fourfold function, that of identification, classification, evaluation and interpretation, confirms that art history is concerned with data and not with action. In its character as research, art history involves a demarcation of an area of knowledge specific to the discipline and the definition of fundamental concepts that underpin this field. The establishment and maintenance of these boundaries is of central concern to the maintenance and proliferation of the discipline. In all of this theorising, however, what can we say about practice in itself? We find that the "unruliness" of practice is difficult, if not impossible, to insinuate into the discipline that has come to be known as Art History.

"Artworks" don't seem to provide us with the same problem as that of the "work of art". We can identify artworks, classify them, interpret them and make evaluations according to criteria established by the discipline of Art History. We can exhibit artworks and study the reception of them. However, does this allow us to get any closer to the "work" of art?

The focus on artworks, rather than practice, has produced a gap in our understanding of the work of art as process. This gap is evident in formal and semiotic analyses of artwork. For example, using the logic of Greenbergian formalism, I could classify and evaluate work in terms of what is unique and irreducible to a particular art form. Similarly, I could follow Bauhaus principles and engage in a formal analysis of an artwork: identify the focal point, pinpoint directional flow, show how the movement in a work is activated by rhythm and repetition, and make some evaluation as to whether the image works formally. Alternatively, I can make a semiotic reading of an image through an analysis of the codes operating in the image. Here I can identify the paradigmatic choices that an artist has made and evaluate how the syntagmatic combination of these visual ele-

ments, enable the work to be read for social meaning. Further, I can bring formal and semiotic models together and demonstrate how the formal and semiotic elements operate to strengthen coherence in a work. In all this thoughtful analysis, do we know any more about the practise of art? What tools are available to enable us to apprehend or understand what is involved in this work?

In sociology and anthropology, participant observation enables the researcher to engage in the observation of the day-to-day activities of individuals, groups and societies. Questionnaires, interviews and other recordings provide raw data, which the researcher then proceeds to identify, classify and interpret. Art research has also come to adopt such methods in its attempts to understand the work of art.

As social science research and cultural studies methods have infiltrated the discipline of art history and theory, artists too, become the object of research methodologies. Film "captures" the actions of artists; interviews record their ponderings and researchers bring their skills of analysis to this data in order that we may gain a greater understanding of the activity of artists. In this process, researchers are concerned with the place of the artist and art in contemporary society. In this context, Norman Bryson argues, painting is a practice that enters into 'interaction with the other domains of practice in the social formation' (Bryson 1983:171). Yet, in drawing attention to the social production of art, Bryson is also keenly aware that western art history and theory fail to take into account the space of the studio and the body of labour engaged in the material practice of making. He acknowledges the problematic that, in western thinking, there is not as yet a unified theory of visual practice, not as data, but as a process that has a particular logic.

So where can we begin? As the painter takes up a position before the canvas and begins work, contends Bryson, there is an encounter between a complex of practical knowledge and a novel situation. Under 'the pressure of the novel demands of the encounter, the complex itself is modified and its tradition extended' (Bryson 1983:16). This relation, between the artist, the complex of practical knowledges, the materials of practice and the novel situation, forms the central concern of this book. Is it possible to postulate a theory of practice that may help us understand it as a generative process?

In *Vision and Painting: the Logic of the Gaze* (1983), Bryson presents us with a description of the process of Matisse at work painting, as filmed through a transparent glass surface:

> The brush, held a few inches from the canvas, begins an arc that moves in slow motion closer and closer to the surface; the point of the brush contacts the canvas, and as the hairs bend, a smooth, even trace of pigment appears; as the brush is still completing that first arc, a second movement begins in the painter's arm, commencing at the shoulder, which moves towards the easel; at the same time, the elbow moves out from the easel, so that the wrist can rotate and realign, like a lever, all the angles of the fingers. The brush, unaware of these developments, is still completing its first movement, but at a certain moment its trajectory changes, slowly lifting from the surface at an angle different from that of its arrival; the trace becomes slender, its edges curving inwards as the hairs on the brush come together, exuding a thick, rich trail of pigment until, as the brush lifts from the canvas altogether, the last filament breaks with the surface, to complete the stroke in space. (Bryson 1983:163)

Bryson provides a richly textured description, tracing the movements of the painter. He suggests that film is able to demonstrate a dimension of intention and decision that otherwise would never have become known. However, I would like to ask: What does this description really tell us about the intention and decisions involved? What can it reveal to us about the "work" of art? Bryson's description, of the process of Matisse painting, exemplifies the difficulty in "getting at" the art of practice. What *can* it tell us about practice in itself and the logic that is inherent in such a practice?

I suspect that by focusing on enunciative practices, that is, the systems of fabrication rather than systems of signification, there is a possibility of investigating the field of an "art of practice" starting from the bottom, rather than from the top down. It is through an analysis of the subtle logic of artistic process that we can begin to articulate the logic of practice. This logic follows on from practice rather than prescribing it.

Strategies and Tactics

In its failure to take into account the body engaged in the material practice of art, art history and theory have missed the opportunity to develop a logic of art practice. De Certeau's analysis of the subtle logic of everyday activities reveals an opportunity for beginning this task. In this analysis, de Certeau distinguishes between strategies and tactics. Strategy, according to de Certeau, is the model upon which political, economic and scientific rationality has been structured. A subject acts strategically according to what has been set before her/him as an object. In this representationalist world, there is a separation of the subject from

the object of research. He argues that strategy is a representationalist mode of operation that is dependent on abstract models for predetermining its outcome. These theoretical models then provide a blueprint for how the world will be organised. In his estimation, the statistical analysis of social scientific research exemplifies precisely such a strategic approach to engaging with the world. In tactics, on the other hand, there is no setting of an object before a subject. Rather, in de Certeau's thinking, 'a tactic insinuates itself into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance' (de Certeau 1988:xiv). In his discussion of tactics, de Certeau notes that a 'tactic boldly juxtaposes diverse elements in order suddenly to produce a flash shedding a different light' (de Certeau 1988:37-38). According to such a logic, opportunities are seized in the heat of the moment. Decisions are made, not according to logical thought, but as a direct and felt response to handling elements.

What relevance does this theorisation of the practices of the everyday have for considering the work of art? Does it, for example, offer us a way to think a logic of practice as Bourdieu claims? The argument—that acts and decisions occur in the heat of the moment not as the result of rational logic—unsettles this quest to develop a logic. The suggestion that these actions do not take a discursive form, but shed a *different* type of light from the light of rational thinking questions such a goal. If we think of "logic" only as the rational activity of a (self) conscious mind, then perhaps it is wrong to think of practice in terms of logic at all. How then might we think this question of practice?

Art Beyond Representation offers an alternative conception of logic. It takes as its central theme the proposition that art is a performative, rather than merely a representational practice. In contrast to prevailing understandings of art as a representational or a signifying practice, this book argues that, through creative practice, a dynamic material exchange can occur between objects, bodies and images. In the dynamic productivity of material practice, reality can get into images. Imaging, in turn, can produce real material effects in the world. The potential of a mutual reflection between objects, images and bodies, forms the basis of my argument for the deformational and transformative potential of images. This performative potential constitutes the power of imaging.

The first three Chapters in this book, consider key writings by the philosopher Martin Heidegger. Whilst the book is not a book on Martin Heidegger, his work on representation, technology and art, allow me to advance a theory of art beyond representation and argue for a theory based on a performative logic of practice. In proposing to move beyond representation, the first task of this book involves setting out the stakes of such an endeavour.

Through attention to the philosophical debates surrounding representation, Chapter One proposes that representation is not just an outcome, but also establishes a representationalist mode of thinking that enables humans to express a will to fixity and mastery over the world. Representationalism orders the world and predetermines what can be thought. As the vehicle through which representationalism can effect a will to fixity and mastery, representation has become the focus of critique amongst both artists and philosophers. In attempting to address the representationalist limits of representation for developing a logic of practice, this Chapter offers a counter-representational model based on notions of handling and handlability. In this conception, the logic of practice asserts a dynamic relationship with the representationalist logic of a self-conscious mind.

Representational representation goes hand-in-hand with the instrumental thinking of contemporary technocratic society. Working with Heidegger's essay 'The Question Concerning Technology' (1954), Chapter Two offers a critique of instrumentalist understandings of the work of art. Through attention to the processes and methodologies of practice, this Chapter refigures the relations of artistic practice. In a reversal of the causal chain of means and ends, the relationship between objects, artists, materials and processes, emerges as one of co-responsibility and indebtedness, rather than one of mastery. According to such a counter-representational understanding of art, the work of art is no longer an object for a subject; the relationship between the artist, objects, materials and processes is no longer one of mastery and all elements are co-responsible for the emergence of art.

In their struggle to negotiate the everyday "business of art", many contemporary artists forget that art is a *poiētic* revealing, not just a means to an end. According to Heidegger's conception of art, it is art as a mode of revealing, not the artwork, that constitutes the work of art. By contrasting the enframing mode of revealing that characterises art business, with art as *poiēsis*, Chapter Three questions whether it is even possible to make art in a contemporary technocratic era. Where art business thrives, what is the future for art as a mode of revealing the Being of art? This question is critical for all forms of contemporary art practice. How can we apprehend the "work" of art in contemporary society?

Whilst Heidegger's theorisation of the revealing potential of the work of art goes beyond representation, it continues to operate within Enlightenment modes of thought. His positioning can not accommodate the possibility that the performative potential of images involves a productive materiality, not just a shift in modes of thought. Chapter Four employs the experience of the blinding glare of

Australian light in offering a critique of the Enlightenment assumptions underpinning the work of art as a revealing. Drawing on the cultural practices of Indigenous Australian artists, the Chapter proposes a radical material performativity in the work of art. It engages with Paul Carter's term *methexis,* to elaborate the productive materiality of ritual practices in Indigenous Australian culture. The material performativity of such practices, suggests the possibility of a materialist ontology of the work of art. The performative power of images and imaging goes beyond its capacity to reveal.

In the final Chapter I address the question of what a radical material performativity might actually look like in the making of work. I suggest that by giving attention to the productive materiality of the "performative act", we are able to commence the task of developing a theory of practice that takes into account the matter of bodies and objects. Such a materialist account of creative practice questions our customary ways of thinking about the work of art. Through a consideration of both literature and painting, this Chapter argues that in the "fuzziness" of practice, there is the potential for a *mutual* reflection between imaging and reality. In this monstrous performativity, the body becomes language rather than merely inscribed by language. I argue that it is through process or practice that the outside world enters the work and the work casts its effects back into the world. In the dynamic productivity of the performative act, the work of art produces ontological effects.

In a world where contemporary artists are often so caught up in the business of art, art-in-itself tends to become subsumed by the creation and marketing of artworks for an art market. In this pre-occupation with art business, artists tend to reduce art to an instrumentalist function, forgetting that art has much greater power. In returning to practice as a source for rethinking the work of art, I make the claim that the relationship between art and the artist moves beyond the realm of representationalist representation. I argue that practice involves a radical material performativity. In a materialist ontology of the work of art, there may be a mutual reflection between imaging and reality. If this is so, then images—including mass media images—are even more powerful than currently imagined. In going beyond representational understandings of the image and imaging and focussing on the operational logic of practice, *Art Beyond Representation* offers a new paradigm in visual aesthetics.

1

TRANSCENDING REPRESENTATIONALISM

> By accident, and sometimes on the brink of an accident, I find myself writing without seeing. Not with my eyes closed, to be sure, but open and disorientated in the night; or else during the day, my eyes fixed on something else, while looking elsewhere, in front of me, for example when at the wheel: I then scribble with my right hand a few squiggly lines on a piece of paper attached to the dashboard or lying on the seat beside me. Sometimes, still without seeing, on the steering wheel itself. (Derrida 1993:3)

Art *is* a representational practice and its products are representations. This statement seems so obviously true, that we rarely pause to question its validity or even define its terms. When we speak, write, draw, take a photograph, construct a digital image or make a video, there seems little dispute that what we are involved in is making representations. Viewers and readers engage with representations. Countless books are written about it. But what is this thing we call representation, and why does it hold such a grip on our imagination? More to the point, why should this book plot a trajectory beyond representation?

In the visual arts, art theorists and historians continue to ground their discussions of art on the unquestioned assumption that art *is* representational. Thus Donald Brook begins his essay 'On Non-verbal Representation'(1997) with the statement:

> Among the problems raised by representational practices the most fundamental are surely those arising in connection with representations that might as well—in the unassuming terms of ordinary language—be called *non-verbal*. Of these, visible (or visual) representations

> are prominent, and have always served the purposes of discussion in an exemplary way. (Brook 1997:232)[1]

In Brook's discussion of representational practices, the term representation is a given. Like many other writers on representation, Brook does not see the need to define the term. Representation remains unremarked.

This raises some fundamental questions. Why does representation continue to operate as the seemingly unassailable and assumed truth underpinning visual practice? Is it possible, for example, to think our productions outside of the paradigm of representation? What would it be like to conceive an image not as a representation? In all this wondering and imagining, however, I am caught short, forced to recognise that perhaps this mental activity, this capacity for imagining *is* itself representational. 'Man as representing subject', notes Heidegger, 'fantasizes … he moves in *imaginatio*' (Heidegger 1977a:147).

The question of representation is central to any debate around the making and interpretation of images. So much has been said against representation by philosophers (such as Heidegger, Deleuze and Irigaray) and so many attempts have been made by contemporary artists (particularly postmodern, postcolonial and feminist artists), to eliminate representation once and for all. And yet the spectre of representation continues to loom large as the system that prescribes the way we know our world.

So what is representation, how does it work and why does it cause so much debate amongst philosophers and artists? Commonsense understandings of the term, tend to conceive representation as a substitute for, or copy of "reality" in some imagistic form—film, literature or visual art. Such a conception has particular consequences for the arts. In the visual arts, for example, representation tends to be conflated with realism or figuration. Here representational art is opposed to abstract or so-called non-representational art. However, according to its critics, representation cannot be conceived so literally. It is not just concerned with realism or figuration, but rather, representation posits a particular relation to, or way of thinking about the world.

What is at issue is not so much representation in itself, but rather how, in the modern world, representation has come to be understood as the structure that enables representationalism to dominate our contemporary way of thinking. Representationalism is a system of thought that fixes the world as an object and resource for human subjects. As a mode of thought that prescribes

all that is known, it orders the world and predetermines what can be thought. Representation becomes the vehicle through which representationalism can effect this will to fixity and mastery.

As one of its most trenchant critics, Martin Heidegger offers the clearest explication of representation and representationalism. In order to grasp the modern essence of the term representation, Heidegger suggests that, we must return to the etymological root of the word and concept 'to represent'. In his enquiry, 'to represent' [*vorstellen*] is to:

> Set out before oneself and to set forth in relation to oneself. Through this, whatever is comes to a stand as object and in that way alone receives the seal of Being. That the world becomes picture is one and the same event with the event of man's becoming *subiectum* in the midst of that which is. (Heidegger 1977a:132)

For Heidegger, representation, or representationalism is a relationship where, whatever *is,* is figured as an object for man-as-subject. It is this objectification of what *is* by man-as-subject (*subiectum*) that constitutes the central focus of the critique of representation.

One of the greatest efforts in philosophy and art in modern times has been devoted to overcoming the limits of representation. Gilles Deleuze suggests that we must first experiment with these limits. He comments that it is:

> A question of extending representation as far as the too large and the too small of difference; of adding a hitherto unsuspected perspective to representation … it is a question of causing a little Dionysian blood to flow in the organic veins of Apollo. (Deleuze 1994:262)

In this Chapter, I will take up this quest and demonstrate how, through practice, the perspective of handling or 'handlability' can disrupt the fixity of representationalism. Handlability involves our concrete dealings with things in the world, rather than our abstract thinking about the world. It is concerned with the logic of practice. In handling, as I will show, Dionysian blood comes to pulse through Apollo's veins.

Before turning to the potential of handlability, this Chapter will set in place the grounds for the critique of representation and representationalism. Drawing on the philosophical criticisms offered by Martin Heidegger, Bruno Latour and Gilles Deleuze, the Chapter foregrounds the vice-like grip that representa-

tionalism holds on contemporary thought. This extended argument against representation and representationalism, is countered by Jacques Derrida's defence of representation. Positioning himself against Heidegger, Derrida argues for an internal movement within representation. He suggests that this condition within representation overcomes the presumed and stultifying fixity of representationalism. Here, both Derrida and Deleuze agree that movement is the key to overcoming the fixity of representationalism. Heidegger's position does not hold open a space for representation. However, his counter-representationalist understanding of handling and handlability provides a concrete way of thinking how this movement might occur.

My discussion will demonstrate the relevance of such debates for thinking a logic of practice. I will argue that the understandings that arise through handling or practice operate in a different register from those that belong to the representational paradigm of man-as-subject in relation to mere objects. In this conceptualisation of practice I hope to demonstrate a movement from representation as a mode of thought to representation as bodies in process.

Re-presentation

Representation may have its limits, but what would we know if representation did not structure our being-in-the-world? Were we to eliminate representation once and for all, would we be plunged into the abyss of chaos? If (as has been argued since Schopenhauer), we only know the world through representation, what of Martin Heidegger's argument that Descartes ushered in the epoch of representation?[2] What happened before representation? We know people made images and looked at them before Descartes, so how did they apprehend them if not as representations? What did the makers of these images think they were doing? And what of cultures not under the sway of Cartesianism, for example, pre-Socratic or Indigenous Australian cultures? How do they comprehend the image if not as representation? I will return to these questions in later Chapters, but firstly, I wish to set out the stakes involved in a representationalist relation to the world.

In the introduction to his paper 'Sending: On Representation' (1982) Jacques Derrida asks what it means to represent something. 'One may say that we represent something (*nous sommes en représentation*)'. But then he continues: 'Are we sure we know what this means, today?' (Derrida 1982:295). Representation has a strong purchase on everyday life. We represent and are represented in many different ways; in parliaments, in the courts, in textual, verbal, aural, visual forms and so forth. As a painter, I am represented by a gallery at the

same time as I *paint* representations. The extent to which representation permeates our lives is summed up in Bruno Latour's observation that:

> The most humble of us lives surrounded by a princely retinue of delegates and representatives. Every night, on television, our representatives in Parliament talk on our behalf. We have delegated to hundreds of non-human lieutenants the task of disciplining, making, and moving other humans or non-humans—lifts, cars, trains, machines. Hundreds of scientific disciplines and instruments constantly bring far away places, objects and time to us which are thus represented—that is presented *again*—for our inspection. In dozens of books, movies, plays and paintings, human and non-human characters represent us with our violence and our fears, populating our world with crowds of friends and enemies. (Latour 1988a:15-16)

Used in many different contexts, in many different ways, it seems extraordinary that one single word could create such a multifarious and colourful cast of characters. Political representatives sit side by side with technological and aesthetic representatives and representations. How can this be, and what is it that allows all these different events and things to operate under the one term, that of representation? And so it seems that some law, some shared or common quality will come to regulate this multiplicity, justify the use of the term representation and allow this representation to represent it. As I will show it is precisely this regulation or ordering—that allows one conception of representation to hold sway over all other conceptions—that is so opposed by Martin Heidegger in his critique of representation and representationalism.

The "re" of representation suggests that to represent, is to present again. In his article 'Visualization and Social Reproduction' (1988a), Latour claims that, in western culture there have existed two vastly different regimes of representation. In the first regime—a regime that he relates to early Christian and medieval understandings of representation—the re-presentation is presented anew *as if* for the first time. It involves presenting again and anew. In the second regime, which he equates with Cartesian understandings of representation, the representation stands *in the place* of an absent object. Thus:

> what is meant by faithful is the ability to maintain through all the transformations of scale, all the various places and times, some inscriptions, some traces that allow those who hold them and look at them to return to the original setting without a prior acquaintance of the scene. (Latour 1988a:23)

In the first regime, coinciding with early Christian and medieval painting, there is a sense in which the representation *is* the thing. Such a sense of presence can be illustrated in relation to medieval paintings of Jesus Christ. Here, Christ is re-presented as the 'ever present Christ' (Latour 1988a:21). In the second regime of representation, there is an assumption of a gap between the thing or referent and its representation. According to this Cartesian regime, the representation stands in the place of the absent object. Representation is a model, not a re-presentation. Through this modelling, portrayals of distant places and times can be made. Latour exemplifies this by reference to the globe of the world represented in Hans Holbein's painting *The Ambassadors* (1533). He claims that the globe provided explorers with a model of the world that helped facilitate the conquest of previously uncharted places.

Latour argues that, in contemporary western society, this second Cartesian regime of representation, where there is a standing-in-for another, has come to dominate our conception of representation. This regime accounts for our political understanding of representation, where a person stands for others. It also fulfils our aesthetic understanding of representation, where the work of art operates as an analogue for something beyond itself, where this something is no longer present. As I will argue in the next section, Heidegger equates this second regime of representation with the modern era. It is this Cartesian regime that becomes the subject of the critique of representation in this Chapter.

In western aesthetics, representation, conceived as a substitute for something else, first found its form in Renaissance art with the conjoining of the systems of perspective and mimesis. Perspective offered a window onto the world, whilst mimesis ensured that the view out this window corresponded with perceptual reality. This modelling created a visual system so powerfully real that western imaging—including digital imaging—continues to be held in its sway.

Our common sense understanding of representation has grown out of this modelling of the world. According to this mode of thought, re-presentation can be understood as a copy of a model. In the world of models and copies, the model exists "out there" as some pre-existing static reality which the copy then imitates. Reality is what-is; and the representation is only ever a copy of it. Representation reflects reality.[3]

The preoccupation with models and copies can be traced back to Plato's postulation of an Ideal world of Forms. In this conception, Ideal Form pre-

exists any actuality. The image or what we have come to know as representation can only ever be an imperfect copy of an Ideal Form. The visual arts, even more than language or philosophy, are infected with models and copies. In the case of the western visual tradition, however, Aristotle's interest in mimesis, rather than Plato's Ideal Forms has come to inform the debate on models and copies.

As a consequence, in the West, discussions and debates around representation have been, as Bryson (1983) points out, underpinned by notions of 'natural attitude' and 'essential copy'.[4] Such notions inform diverse and often contradictory views about representation. On the one hand "commonsense" artistic judgements are often based on assessing the degree of exactitude between representation and reality. At quite a different level, the gap or lack between representation and reality has come to inform such theories as psychoanalysis and structuralism. Psychoanalytic theories, for example the theories of Jacques Lacan, are grounded in the assumption that the gap between representation and reality can never be bridged. Consequently, in this view, we are forever lacking.

As a result of this conceptual framing of representation, the critique of Cartesian representation has tended to be conflated with the critique of realism or figuration. In this conflation, representation equals realism which is opposed to abstraction or non-representation. However, what is at stake in the act of representation is not, as is commonly supposed, simply the realistic or figurative representation of a reality that "exists out there". As I will argue in the next section, representation is not an outcome, but rather a mode of thinking and a relationship to the world that involves a will to fixity and mastery. According to such a conception, representation should not be confused with realism. Moreover, abstraction may be as representationalist as realism.

The Age of the World Picture

In his essay 'The Age of the World Picture' (1950) Heidegger designates the modern epoch *as* the era of representation.[5] In this era, the world is reduced to a picture, that is, to a representation. In order to understand what he means by this and to be able to advance my argument that modern or Cartesian representation is a mode of thought that involves a will to fixity and mastery, I want to return to Martin Heidegger's careful unpacking of the term representation.

In his attempts to grasp the modern essence of representedness, Heidegger sets out the origins of the term 'to represent' which he translates as *vorstellen*. For Heidegger, *vorstellen* involves a relationship where the world is 'set out before oneself and set forth in relation to oneself' (Heidegger 1977a:132). In this relation of setting before and in relation to oneself, the world becomes a picture for a human subject.[6]

When we think of the word 'picture', we tend to think first of all of a copy of something; perhaps a painting, drawing, photograph, written description or more commonly a mental image. We tend to assume that a picture has the quality of being like something in the world. However, Heidegger makes it clear that when he talks of a 'world picture', he does not mean a picture in the sense of a copy of the world. This conception is too literal and falls back into the presumptions of natural attitude and essential copy. In the Heideggerian conception of representation, the term is neither used in its everyday multiplicity of uses nor in the sense of presenting an image, but rather as a regime or system of organizing the world, by which the world is reduced to a norm or a model. In this mediation, the world is conceived and grasped primordially as a picture (Heidegger 1977a:129).

It was Descartes, according to Heidegger, who inaugurated the new paradigm of representation and reduced the world to a picture.[7] In her article 'Representation and its Limits in Descartes' (1988), Dalia Judovitz examines how the Cartesian notion of the prototype refigures what is meant by a picture. She argues that by framing the world in a particular order, the Cartesian 'mathematical rhetorical demand reduces the world to an object that has the character of a picture' (Judovitz 1988:75). This picture is not a mimetic image, but rather is a prototype, model or schema for what the world could be like. Urban planning and architectural design can provide us with an example of this compulsion to model. Small cardboard, MDF and matchstick models are made and displayed for our perusal. The models provide a prototype or schema and predetermine what the world will be like.

A prototype implies the formulation of a concept before an actualisation; that "the thing" is thought before it is brought into being. Thus Judovitz says:

> Rather than merely describing things, it actually prescribes them by setting them up in advance hypothetically as a prototype. Since mathematics axiomatically constructs the objects it proposes to recognise, it discovers only that which it produces. (Judovitz 1988:74)[8]

Descartes' mathematisation of knowledge provided the conditions of possibility for reducing the world to a schema, a set of standards or norms. It is not a representation, in the sense of a repetition of presence as with the early Greeks or early Christians, but literally a *re*-presentation of the world. For Heidegger, it involves a projection of what-is (Heidegger 1977a:144). Thus modern Cartesian representation is not concerned with a visual picturing, with mimesis, but rather with a modelling or framing of the world. It is the reduction of the world to data.

Cartesian representation, with its formal normative character predestines our understanding of the world. Thus for Heidegger, representation does not operate in the paradigm of resemblance, and does not operate as a copy of some prior original, nor is it redolent of Plato's Ideal Forms. In Plato's figuration, Ideal Forms exist anterior to any human attempt to model them, conceptually or actually. This is not the case with representation as conceptualised by Descartes. In representation someone conceptualises; someone models the world. In this schema, what counts as Being is already pre-meditated and, for Heidegger, this means that Being-as-such is precluded. Herein lays the basis of the Heideggerian critique of representation.

In Descartes' conception of the world, the objective structure of representation implies an ordering. In the Heideggerian schema, it is man-as-subject (*subiectum*) who orders the world and produces the picture.[9] Dorothea Olkowski suggests, that it is in the 'guise of the technological-calculative "man" posing as master', that 'the world is conceived and grasped as a picture' (Olkowski 1988:106). The world becomes a picture and is able to be modelled because man looks upon it and represents it. In setting the world before, and in relation to himself, man places himself at the centre of all relations (Olkowski 1988:106). He becomes *subiectum*.

In order to understand the paradigm shift that enabled humans to become the centre of all relations, I wish to turn to Heidegger's discussion of the historical relation between "Being" and "what-is". Through this discussion we come to understand that the fundamental basis of Heidegger's critique of Cartesian representation derives from the propensity of humans to objectify and master. In a comparison of early Greek and Modern epochs, Heidegger explains the historical shift in the understanding of what-is. He suggests that in the pre-Socratic Greek world, man is the one who is looked upon by what-is. In the Modern epoch a reversal occurs. Man is the one who does the looking. He becomes the one who looks upon what-is. What–is becomes an object of man's scrutiny.

For the early Greeks, what-is, was presence. In this conception, thought and being were not separated. In the Greek world, Heidegger argues that:

> Man is the one who is … gathered towards presencing, by that which opens itself.… Therefore, in order to fulfil his essence, Greek man must gather *(legein)* and save *(sōzein),* catch up and preserve, what opens itself in its openness, and he must remain exposed *(alētheuein)* to all its sundering confusion. (Heidegger 1977a:131)

Olkowski claims, that in this world where man was looked upon by that which-is, 'Prometheus is tied to the rock, Pentheus dismembered by the Bacchae [and] Acteon changed into a stag and torn to bits by his own pack of hounds' (Olkowski 1988:97). Reality looms up before man and confronts him in the power of its presence. The openness and exposure to that-which-lies-before *(hypokeimenon),* was for the Greeks the horizon of unconcealment. In this apprehension of the world, Heidegger proposes, the '*ego* tarries within the horizon of unconcealment that is meted out to it' (Heidegger 1977a:145). What opens up in this horizon becomes present as what-is, so that the "I" belongs in the company of what-is. In the company of what-is, man is neither privileged nor detached, but rather merely exists among other things. Thus in the very ancient Greek world, Being 'is presencing and truth is unconcealment' (Heidegger 1977a:147). In this openness and exposure, the world is not a picture, that is, not a representation. Representation did not negotiate what-is. Man could not be *subiectum*.

In contrast, in the modern epoch, man becomes the determining centre of reality. It is from this secure centre that man goes forth from out of himself. He sets what is present at hand before himself and sets it in place as an object for a subject. In this new relationship to reality, says Heidegger, 'man as representing subject … moves in *imaginatio*, in that his representing imagines, pictures forth whatever is, as the objective, into the world as picture' (Heidegger 1977a:147). Man is no longer vulnerable or open to that which lies before and looms up to confront him, but instead, he secures himself as centre and takes precedence over all other possible centres of relationship. He is no longer looked upon by what-is, but is the one who represents what-is.

According to Heidegger, the pre-Socratic Greek world was not predicated on a concept of representation and the Greeks did not think representationally. However, according to Heidegger, late Greek thinking prepared the conditions and provided the possibility for representation to be set in place. Heidegger identifies Platonic thought as foundational in preparing the way for the repre-

sentational epoch. He claims that Plato's notion of Forms or Ideas laid the foundation that enabled a separation of what-is from presence. What-is came to be determined as *eidos*, mere appearance or look. In this shift from presence to look, the foundations are laid for what-is to be conceived as an image (*Bild*). This recognition provided the doctrinal basis that, according to Heidegger, would one day permit the world to become *Bild*, become a picture.

Heidegger's critique of Cartesian representation hinges on the fact that it establishes a frame that produces the objectification and mastery of the world by man as *subiectum*. Heidegger argues that, where what-is, is reduced to a schema, there is a halt in Being. In setting the Greek apprehension of the world as presencing, against the modern representation of the world as *subiectum*, Heidegger aims to bring to the surface what constitutes this loss of, or halt to, Being. For the early Greeks, notes Derrida, 'the being of what-is never consists in an object *(Gegenstand)* brought before man, fixed, stopped, available for the human subject who would possess a representation of it' (Derrida 1982:306). Heidegger observes, on the other hand, that modern man brings what-is present at hand *(das Vorhandene)* before himself 'as something standing over against' (Heidegger 1997a:131). Man relates it to himself since he is the one representing it. In this, man becomes the centre over and above all other possible centres. In the world of representation and man as *subiectum*, representing is no longer self-unconcealing as with the Greeks, but is rather a laying hold of and grasping. Heidegger claims that in the epoch of Cartesian representation, assault rules. The regime of representation produces violence. He concludes:

> That which is, is no longer that which presences; it is rather that which, in representing, is first set over against, that which stands fixedly over against, which has the character of an object…. Representing is making-stand-over-against, an objectifying that goes forward and masters…. In this way representing drives everything together into the unity of that which is thus given the character of object. (Heidegger 1977a:150)

No longer is man amongst, and looked upon by, that which-is; he now is the one who looks. In this relation, everything that-is is transformed and set in order, as standing reserve (*Bestand*). Through man's ability to represent or model the world, he secures the world for his own use. But with this newly acquired power, Heidegger warns, a terrible loss is incurred. Because man no longer lays himself open to the world, he can no longer experience what-is as Being.

Representationalism and the Technologisation of Thought

One of the more insightful contributions of 'The Age of the World Picture' is the link that Heidegger establishes between research and science, technology and representation. On first impressions this may appear to have little relevance for visual arts practice, since it is often assumed that the visual arts have nothing in common with science or research. However, in contemporary art practice, where technology, conceptualism and creative arts research have become dominant forces shaping the field of practice, Heidegger's argument that knowing as research conceives what-is representationally, reminds us that artistic inquiry, like science research has a propensity to frame what can be known and seen.

Heidegger's argument proceeds on the premise that research is the mathematisation of knowledge, a mode of thought that pre-conceives its outcome. In this train of thought he continues:

> We first arrive at science as research when the Being of whatever is, is sought in … objectiveness. This objectifying of whatever is, is accomplished in a setting before, a representing, that aims at bringing each particular being before it in such a way that man who calculates can be sure, and that means be certain of that being. (Heidegger 1977a:127)

He proposes that science as research proceeds through the delimitation of spheres of objects and the projecting of ground plans that specify laws. It is these laws that prescribe in advance what is to be known. Following Descartes' understanding that science proceeds from a universal order that anticipates the particular, Heidegger suggests that the conditions that define an experiment are anticipated by a law that has already been set in place.[10] Thus he says 'to set up an experiment means to represent or conceive *(vorstellen)* the conditions under which a specific series of motions can … be controlled in advance by calculation' (Heidegger 1977a:121). In this conception of scientific methodology, a framework is set in place and it is this framework that enframes.

The assertion that modern science as research is enframing, provides Heidegger with a context in which to develop his critique of representationalism as an objectifying mode of thought. The methods of science enable us to witness, first hand, the reduction of what-is to objects. These objects are in turn reduced to standing reserve. William Lovitt argues that as standing reserve, objects exist in their readiness for use by man as representing subject (Lovitt in Heidegger 1977a:xxix). Things in the world exist out there, ready to

be collected, quantified and calculated, turned into representations, so that man may use them in his quest to master the world. In the next Chapter I will return to the dangers of enframing as a mode of knowing the world. However, in this Chapter, I am concerned with how enframing or instrumentalism operates in research.

Heidegger suggests that through its ability to reduce everything to an object, science as research enframes us; it sets a limit on what and how we think. Judovitz terms this the technologisation of thought. Judovitz specifies that technologisation of thought *is* representationalist thought. She argues that:

> The essence of representation is technological insofar as this schema that it applies to the world frames it in such a way that the world can only appear or be figured within its limits and as its verification. (Judovitz 1988:75)

Don Ihde notes that for Heidegger, art is not as reductive in the same way as science as research, since 'art is essentially anti-reductive in its imaginative fecundity' (Ihde 1977:129). However, in a time when art practice has increasingly taken on the quality of inquiry or research, the critique of the technologisation of thought raises urgent questions. If we take the view that art *is* research, it could be argued that the artist, as much as scientist or bureaucrat, looks upon the world as standing reserve. Through her/his ability to model the world, s/he secures the world for her/his own use. Considered in the light of this framework, representationalism or the technologisation of thought can be implicated in abstraction and conceptualism just as much as in realism. The dilemma for artists is how to resist the temptation of conceiving the world only as a resource for her/his ends, whilst remaining open to the world so as to experience what-is as being.

Immutable Mobiles

For Latour, the technologisation of thought was enabled by a significant paradigm shift that occurred in the sixteenth century. Unlike Heidegger who reflects on the metaphysical ground which underpins the essence of modern science, Labour attributes this paradigm shift to movements in the 'precise practice and craftsmanship of knowing' (Latour 1986:3). Using the figure of the 'immutable mobile', Latour sets out to demonstrate how scientific innovations in writing and imaging craftsmanship enabled reality to be turned into data and transported over space and time.[11]

The example of Gutenberg's printing press best illustrates the formative role of technology in such a paradigm shift. The printing process enabled cheap, mass produced re-presentations of inscriptive processes (words, drawings, maps etc.), which could then be widely distributed amongst the populace. As a result of this mobility, data became moveable even as it became immutable. Thus scientific empiricism and its vehicles, immutable mobiles, facilitated a fundamental shift in the way humans came to understand their world.

Immutable mobiles can best be described as inscriptions or mappings distilled from raw data or reality. By inscriptions, Latour refers to inscriptions as the marks, signs, prints and diagrams made by humans. These inscriptions form into chains or cascades. The key character of these chains or cascades is an unchanging form that can be moved across vast distances and presented in other places in the absence of the things they refer to. Absent things are able to be transmitted with optical consistency. The French Ambassador's globe, in Holbein's painting *The French Ambassadors*, provides one such example. A map drawn on paper also has the qualities of mobility and immutability whereas a map drawn in the sand will be washed away with the next incoming tide. Possessing the qualities of mobility and immutability, 'immutable mobiles' are therefore a means of presenting absent things. The re-presentations are objects of knowledge that have, according to Latour, 'the properties of being *mobile* but also *immutable, presentable, readable* and *combinable* with one another' (Latour 1986:7).[12]

To illustrate the operation of the logic of immutable mobiles, Latour cites his experience as a scientist working in a laboratory. He gives the example of the transformation of rats and chemicals onto paper. In a laboratory situation, he argues, 'anything and everything was transformed into inscriptions' (Latour 1986:3-4). These inscriptions, he observes, are 'combinable, superimposable and could … be integrated as figures in the text or the articles people were writing' (Latour 1986:4).

This transformation of flesh into data is one of the hallmarks defining our contemporary lives. We willingly provide information in forms that can be turned into immutable mobiles. The information we give, whether it is in opinion polls, census collections, taxation returns, enrolment forms or social security applications, is transformed into data. This data takes the form of tables of figures, which are then used by bureaucracies and governments to make decisions that impact upon our lives. Inscriptions stand in our place. They are abstractions which are able to be moved around, combined, com-

pared, superimposed and used to represent us and to make decisions about our lives. And so people running, cycling or walking the dog, become shapes on a bar graph or numbers in a table. Reality is fixed and set before human subjects as an object of investigation.

Latour's explication of immutable mobiles demonstrates how the regime of representation has become so authoritative and pervasive. For Latour, what is at stake:

> Is not the visual characteristics of a painting, of a drawing, of a map, of a diagram, but the regime of re-presentation of which the visual implementation is but a consequence. The key question is not about degrees of "realism" but about the articulation to be made between mobility and immutability. (Latour 1988a:26)

What becomes clear in this, is that we are dealing with a particular underlying logic and not merely a question of appearances. This is the logic of representationalism.

Latour's elaboration of inscriptions and immutable mobiles provides a way of thinking about the precise practice and craftsmanship of knowing that enabled science as research and now enables art as inquiry. He argues that the articulation and proliferation of inscriptions and immutable mobiles enabled the paradigm shift that we have come to associate with the modern. It is through the operation of inscriptions, cascades and immutable mobiles, that the world *can* become a picture or theme in the Heideggerian sense. The mobilisation through space and time, enabled by technology, produces the world as picture.

Latour's understanding of inscriptions, cascades and immutable mobiles forms a productive dialogue with Heidegger's explication of the world as picture. According to this view the fundamental event of the modern age has been the conquest of the world as picture. Man has been able to structure his reality through an ability to set before himself what-is. This structured image or immutable mobile is a consequence of the fact that:

> Man brings into play his unlimited power for the calculating, planning, and moulding of all things. Science as research is an absolutely necessary form of this establishing of self in the world. (Heidegger 1977a:135)

In research, the institutionalisation of knowledge produces cascades of immutable mobiles which take us on a predestined trajectory. Photographs, maps of the world, architectural models of a future building, town plans, the genetic code and statistics are immutable mobiles that provide the prototypes for a technological world. This data and these inscriptions can then be used to make decisions that affect the actual lives of the people and others whose Being was, in the inscription, reduced to a statistic or a model. The immutable mobile becomes emblematic of the technologisation of thought. It pictures the world.

The logic of the immutable mobile disregards or rather suppresses variability. It assumes that if we repeated the actions, the results would always be the same. In contrast, the variability produced by bodies in interaction produces an inexhaustible complexity that can never be reduced to fixity. In many ways, immutable mobiles remain crude, but never-the-less powerful figures that enable fixity where there is in fact variability. It is the politics of representation, rather than the images that is at issue.

Representation and inscriptive processes are interdependent. The logic I have elaborated may also be seen to be integral to art when it is conceived of as a product rather than a process. Just as rats and chemicals are transformed into inscriptions and people transformed into tables of figures, so in the drawing or painting of a landscape, landforms, plants, skies, clouds, water and chemicals (paint pigments, photographic chemicals and so forth) can be seen to be transformed into inscriptions. These inscriptions are integrated as figures in artworks which appear in galleries, in films, on the world-wide-web and elsewhere. As I will demonstrate in Chapter Three, where art is subsumed under 'art business', it is reduced to data.

Immutable Mobiles and the Politics of Representation

In an information age, the politics of immutable mobiles concerns the struggle for power over knowledge and information and not all inscriptions—words, drawings, diagrams, maps, charts or tables of figures—effect the way we (collectively and individually) come to know and be in the world. What gives some inscriptions the force to make a difference to the way we know and understand the world? Latour—in a move that echoes Heidegger's discussion of the role of publishing in 'The Age of the World Picture'—suggests it is when those procedures and inscriptions are able to 'muster, align and win over new and unexpected allies' (Latour 1986:6). It is this force that produces shifts in belief and behaviour. This shift transforms what and how it is to be.

In illuminating the way inscriptive practices come to shape the way we know and are known, Latour's elaboration of immutable mobiles has strong affinities with Foucault's theorisation of the archaeology of knowledge. Latour is concerned with how those material and mundane practices, so close to the eyes and hands, profoundly influence the way knowledge is made and distributed. Similarly, Foucault focuses on the use of files, accounting books and procedures in an institution to create an 'invisible power that sees everything about everyone' (Latour 1996:15).[13]

In order to demonstrate this, Latour shows how the technical inventions and the craftsmanship of mapping, enabled colonial domination in the eighteenth century. He cites the example of the French explorer La Pérouse who was dispatched from Versailles, by Louis XVI, to map the coastline of Sakhalin in China. In Latour's narrative, an encounter between La Pérouse and a local Chinese man exemplifies the stakes involved inscriptive processes. Whilst the Chinese man was content to draw a map in the sand, La Pérouse insisted that these inscriptions be transferred to a notebook with pencil. Two sets of inscriptions: but of very different weight and effect! The documentation of performance and ephemeral art work entails a similar politic. Without photographic, video or written documentation, ephemeral and performance works have the same status as the Chinese man's drawing. They are erased with the passing of time and the dimming of memory. They can make no claim to a legitimate place in art discourse. Documentation enables such a claim to be made.

A map is a series of drawn lines and marks on a piece of paper. You may not be able to feel the cold, or smell the salt air when you look at La Pérouse's map of Sakhalin, however you could *use* it to find your way. Riding on La Pérouse's crude inscription was the quest for ownership over foreign lands. Whilst the inscriptions in the sand were erased in the rising tide, the inscriptions in the notebook became a vehicle through which the French, and other colonial nations, were able to plot their conquests of far away lands. The technical inventions and the craftsmanship of mapping went hand in hand with imperialist and commercial interests.[14]

In La Pérouse's time, the printing press enabled his map to be reproduced and represented ad infinitum. Now, digital technology has come to usurp the position of the printing press, speeding up and changing the quality of the processes of mobilisation and immutability. According to Latour, this mobilization has enabled 'the links between different places in time and space [to be] completely modified by [a] fantastic acceleration of immutable mobiles which circulate everywhere' (Latour 1986:11).

Latour's critique of immutable mobiles concurs with Heidegger's critique of representationalism. In Latour's laboratory, rats and chemicals are transformed into marks on paper thus quickly dispatching with the bleeding and screaming rats. In Heidegger's articulation Being as what-is is set aside. Being becomes technical; it becomes a product. The picture we are left with is one of alienation from Being.

Representation Thought Differentially

Heidegger claims that the specific understanding of truth that holds dominion over the modern age is representation as a schema, rather than a presencing. However, he does not believe we should submit to its inevitability. In fact, he believes that we should have the courage to reflect upon the presuppositions of modern representationalism and call into question its goals. He warns that if 'man dawdles about in the mere negating of the age' and does not take the courage to question its presumptions and its goals, the opportunity to be transported into that "between" will be lost (Heidegger 1977a:115). The 'between' that Heidegger refers to, is that state 'in which he belongs to Being and yet remains a stranger amidst that which is' (Heidegger 1977a:136). In Heidegger's estimation, failure to reflect on our Being as beings will result in self-deception and blindness.[15]

If we only had the courage to reflect on modernity, Heidegger claims, we would see that the seeds of transformation already exist within the very vehicles that appear to sustain the representational frame. A sign of this, he claims is that:

> Everywhere and in the most varied forms and disguises the gigantic is making its appearance. In so doing, it evidences itself simultaneously in the tendency toward the increasingly small.… But as soon as the gigantic in planning and calculating and adjusting and making shifts over out of the quantitative and becomes a special quality, then what is gigantic, and what can seemingly always be calculated completely, becomes, precisely through this incalculable. (Heidegger 1977a:135)

For Heidegger, as soon as the 'gigantic' shifts out of the quantitative into the qualitative it ceases to be calculable. This 'becoming incalculable', as Heidegger puts it, casts an 'invisible shadow around all things everywhere when man has been transformed into *subiectum* and the world into picture' (Heidegger 1977a:135). As a consequence he concludes:

> By means of this shadow the modern world extends itself out into a space withdrawn from representation, and so lends to the incalculable the determinateness peculiar to it. (Heidegger 1977a:136)

Heidegger's assessment of the potential of the gigantic to exceed the quantitative within representation and become incalculable, resonates with Deleuze's strategy to overcome the limits of representation, by 'extending representation as far as the too large and too small of difference' (Deleuze 1994:262). In reflecting upon the presuppositions of representational thinking, Heidegger's picturing of representation leaves us at a loss as to the tools and strategies we need to move beyond representationalism. If anything, the argument in 'The Age of the World Picture' becomes representationalist itself. Whilst in the final section of this Chapter I will argue that Heidegger's notions of handling and handlability provide the tools to enact this move, I first want to set out Derrida's objections to Heidegger's critique of representation.

In his conclusion to 'Sending: On Representation', Derrida makes his objection clear when he makes the point:

> Is not the whole schema of Heidegger's reading challengeable in principle, deconstructed from an historical point of view … if there has been representation, the epochal reading that Heidegger proposes for it becomes … problematic from the beginning, at least as a normative reading (and it wishes to be this also), if not as an open questioning of what offers itself to thought beyond the problematic, and even beyond the question as a question of Being, of a grouped destiny or of the *envoi* of Being. (Derrida 1982:322-323)

It is not an easy task to reflect upon representation and *not* re-iterate representation. Derrida argues that Heidegger turns representation against representation in order to critique representation. He notes that Heidegger's interpretation of representation 'presupposes a representational pre-interpretation of representation' (Derrida 1982:320). Whilst Heidegger's critique of representation is centred on the way representation fixes, holds and masters, Derrida argues that this is precisely what Heidegger achieves. Not only does Heidegger present the modern world as picture, but he also wants to throw the modern world as picture 'into relief over against the medieval and ancient world pictures' (Heidegger 1977a:128). Surely this is a contradiction in terms? If the world, as a picture, is equivalent to the world as representation and representation is characteristic of the modern epoch, then is it not a contradiction to speak of medieval and ancient world pictures? Heidegger says as much him-

self. Wherever we have a world picture, he argues, 'the Being of whatever is, is sought and found in the representedness' of whatever is (Heidegger 1977a:130). He continues:

> Everywhere that whatever is, is not interpreted in this way … there can be no world picture. The fact that whatever is comes into being in and through representedness transforms the age in which this occurs into a new age … the expressions "world picture of the modern age" and "modern world picture" both … assume something that *never* could have been before, namely, a medieval and an ancient world picture. (Heidegger 1977a:130: my emphasis)

In this way, representation becomes a trap for Heidegger. As a prototype that frames and enframes, his picture of the world does not allow us to move beyond the representational frame. It seems that Heidegger's argument is itself representational. As Olkowski has noted, his method of working within the structure that he wants to supplant, 'endlessly encircles him in the limits of representation' (Olkowski 1988: 106). In this sense Heidegger's theorisation is still a representation of representation and as such does not open out onto an altogether different way of thinking. His epoch traps him in representation. It is only in his counter-representationalist conception of handling and handlability that Heidegger suggests a way out of this impasse.

Olkowski addresses this problem, not just in terms of Heidegger, but as a criticism of philosophy in general. She says that:

> The concepts that much of social and political philosophy has embraced … make change impossible insofar as they are rigid representational concepts that lack the fluidity that is conducive to conceptual change. (Olkowski 1999:94)

Derrida takes up the point that the concepts that philosophy has adopted have been rigidly representationalist. He accepts that the premise on which representation is based presupposes an invariable identity and a system of substitutability. According to this regime of representation, notes Derrida:

> Despite a diversity of words from diverse languages, under the diversity of the uses of the same word, under the diversity of contexts or of syntactic systems, the same referent, the same representative content would keep its inviolable identity. (Derrida 1982:303)

However, Derrida is not content to accept these terms. What if kernels of different meanings start to bud, grow and disrupt unity, thus fracturing such identity? Derrida's question is simple. Why do we maintain this compulsion to try to fix meaning and overcome the polysemy of a word (Derrida 1982:299-300)?

Derrida's opportunity to break open representation is provided by the trajectory of Heidegger's argument against representation. For Heidegger, says Derrida, representational logic produces what-is as 'an object brought before man, fixed, stopped, available for the human subject who would possess a representation of it' (Derrida 1982:306). However, if as Heidegger argues, what-is can mutate from what-is as presence in the Greek world, to what-is as a relation of representation in the modern, what is to say that representation itself is not undergoing transformations? Moreover if, as Heidegger argues, Plato set up the preconditions for representation and sent it on its way, then perhaps movement is a fundamental condition inside representation itself. Movement *is* imbricated in Heidegger's concept of "destining" or sending (*envois*). He recognises this when he points out that, 'that which has the character of destining moves, in itself at any time, toward a special moment that sends it into another destining, in which, however, it is not simply submerged and lost' (Heidegger 1977a:37). If this is the case, then perhaps representation can never presume fixity or invariability. Perhaps Heidegger's critique of representation's 'will to fixity' is not born out by an inherent condition that operates inside representation itself. According to Derrida, this condition can best be understood as the operation of *différance*.

In his introduction to the essay '*Différance*' (1968), Derrida explains that *différance* is not a word nor a concept, but rather an economy.[16] Derrida introduces the term *sheaf* to demonstrate the complex structure of weaving that occurs in the economy. He provisionally calls this structure *différance*. He suggests that this complex structure is 'an interlacing which permits the different threads and different lines of meaning—or force—to go off again in different directions, just as it is always ready to tie itself up with others' (Derrida 1992:109). Derived from the Latin *differre*, the verb *différer* has two distinct meanings. In one sense, *différer* refers to the action of putting off until later. Derrida notes that according to this meaning, there is implied 'an economical calculation, a detour, a delay, a relay, a reserve, a representation' (Derrida 1992:112). Used in this sense, *différer* involves a temporal dimension. In its other usage, says Derrida *différer* means 'to be not identical, to be other, discernible' (Derrida 1992:112). Understood in the dual sense of deferral and difference, Derrida argues that *différance* designates a 'constitutive, productive and originary causal-

ity, the process of scission and division which would produce or constitute different things or differences' (Derrida 1992:112-113). Thought in terms of *différance*, representation begins to bud and grow in a disorderly fashion. It becomes incalculable**.**

Derrida's defence of representation is contained in his 'Sending: On Representation'. In setting out his own defence of representation, Derrida employs a strategy that is both an argument for and an enactment of *différance*. The lecture was presented as the opening address of a congress of French-speaking philosophical societies at Strasbourg. He used his position as a representative of a philosophical society, presenting a paper on representation, at a philosophical conference on representation, to lay out the stakes involved in representation. In this paper he takes Heidegger's epochal reading of representation and unravels its presumed fixity. In Derrida's argument, Strasbourg becomes a metaphor for the congress, for the encounter of different languages and for the debate on representation. Derrida suggests that in its position as a border or frontier town between France and Germany, Strasbourg is an ideal place to test the presumed invariable identity of representation. As a place where different languages and different cultural practices encounter each other, the effects of passage and of translation on representation become palpable. In Strasbourg difference comes up against difference and the possibility opens for something to happen.

In Strasbourg, where French and German come face to face, Derrida takes on Heidegger's argument against representationalism and builds his own defence of representation. Derrida goes to the root of the concept of representation and sets out to show how *différance* operates to produce, what Deleuze has termed, a 'veritable theatre of metamorphoses and permutations' (Deleuze 1983:56). It is through the lesson of translation that Derrida builds a place for representation. For him, the crux of the mutability of representation turns on the axis of translation; the translation from one state to another, from one form to another and so on. Representation is a sending or a sending on (*envoi*). Through his use of Heidegger's own term 'sending', accompanied by a careful unpicking of Heidegger's argument, he demonstrates how representation as process is inherently transformative in character.

The effect of translation can be demonstrated simply enough by juxtaposing two different translations of the same section of Heidegger's text. The first translation of Heidegger's text is a segment of Derrida's translation of Heidegger's 'Age of the World Picture' re-translated by Peter and Anne-Marie Caws. The second is a translation of the same section of the essay by William Lovitt. The translation of Derrida's translation reads:

> It is something entirely different that, in contrast to Greek understanding, signifies *(meint)* modern representation *(das neuzeitliche Vorstellen),* whose signification *(Bedeutung)* reaches its best expression *(Ausdruck)* in the word *repraesentatio*. *Vorsetellen bedeutet hier*, representation signifies here: *das Vorhandene als ein Entgegenstehendes vor sich bringen, auf sich, den Vorstellenden zu beziehen und in diesen zu sich als das massegebenden Bereich zuruckzwingen*, to make the existent (which is already before one: *Vorhandene*) come before one as a standing-over-against, to relate it to the self who represents it and in this way to force it back on self as a determining field. (Derrida 1982:307)

In contrast, Lovitt's translation reads:

> In distinction from Greek apprehending, modern representing whose meaning the word *repraesentatio* first brings to its earliest expression, intends something quite different. Here to represent (*vor-stellen*) means to bring what is present at hand (*das Vorhanden)* before oneself as something standing over against, to relate it oneself, to the one representing it, and to force it back into this relationship to oneself as the normative realm. (Heidegger 1977a:131)

The coupling of these two translations demonstrates Derrida's point. The process of translation necessarily involves corruption. It is this corruption that produces permutations and brings about metamorphosis. Heidegger's own translation of *repraesentatio* as *vorstellung*, demonstrates this clearly. *Representatio* means to render present. The "re" of *repraesentatio* evokes the power-of-bringing-back-to-presence in a repetitive way. *Vorstellung,* the word which Heidegger takes as equivalent of *repraesentatio*, takes on quite a different emphasis. It signifies 'to place, dispose before oneself, a sort of theme or thesis' (Derrida 1982:307). How then can we reconcile these two seemingly contradictory senses, that of presence and appearance or presence as an image before one? Did Heidegger not set up an opposition between presence and representation? Wasn't presence the domain of the Greeks, whilst representation was the destiny of the modern epoch? Derrida explains this seeming contradiction or opposition:

> This power-of-bringing-back, in a repetitive way, is marked simultaneously by the re- of representation *and* in this positionality, this power-of-placing, disposing, putting, that is to be read in *Stellen* and which at the same time refers back to the self, that is to the power of a subject

> who can bring back to presence and make present, make something present to itself, indeed just make itself present. This making present can be understood in two senses at least; this duplicity is at work in the term representation. (Derrida 1982:308)

Having laid out the duplicity at work in the term representation, Derrida asks whether this so-called relation or substitution already escapes the orbit of representation. His exegesis demonstrates precisely the opening potential, the already-not-yet that is implicit in the very act of translation.

Against Heidegger's argument that representationalism produces totalisation and fixity, Derrida returns us to the 're' of representation. He argues that the idea of being before, is already implicit in pre-sent. According to him, the 're' of *repraesentatio* allows for a '*rendering* present of a summonsing as a power-of-bringing-back-to-presence' (Derrida 1982:307). He claims that the power-of-bringing-back-to-presence in a repetitive way can be read in the *stellen* of *Vorstellen*. So how does this power-of-bringing-back-to-presence break open representation to another rendering?

The power-of-bringing-back-to-presence, suggested in the duplicity of representation, recalls Heidegger's distinction between what-is as presence and what-is as representation. Instead of opposing them, seeing them as belonging to different times and different places, we can take a different trajectory. We can bring to the fore, Derrida's notion of sending (*envoi*), which itself is indebted to Heidegger's destining. In destining (*Geschick*), says Heidegger, there is that 'sending-that-gathers (*versammmelde Schicken*) that starts man upon a way of revealing' (Heidegger 1977a:24).

In 'The Age of the World Picture', Heidegger notes that the displacement of presence by representation finds its beginnings in the figure of Plato. Heidegger identifies the impetus for a representational mode of thinking within Platonic thought. Whilst Plato existed within Greek thinking, his postulation of an Ideal world of Forms, constituted that sending-that-gathers and started man upon a way to a representational revealing. In the world of Ideal Forms, Being is perfectly and timelessly present to itself. The actual world by contrast is but an imperfect copy. Here, vibrating on the edge between the world as presence and the world as representation, Plato dispatched a possibility, sent an envoy on its way. Derrida details this particular moment as that which is already-not-yet.

But if as Heidegger argues, Plato prepared the conditions for representation and sent it on its way, did he also cut the umbilical cord that detached presence

from representation? Did representation detach itself from the world of presence and go on its way uninfected by presence? Derrida proposes that in his singling out and detachment or delegation, Heidegger fails to take into account the lessons of translation. *If* there has been representation then it may be that it begins by referring back *(par le renvoi)* (Derrida 1982:324). Derrida argues that, in referring back:

> It does not begin; and once this breaking open or this partition divides, from the very start, every *renvoi*, there is not a single *renvoi*, but from then on, always a multiplicity of *renvois*, so many different traces referring back to other traces and to the traces of others. (Derrida 1982:324)

Derrida is emphatic. This is not a lack, nor is representation indivisible. In sending out, there is bifurcation. As Derrida puts it, there is 'a condition for there being an *envoi*, possibly an *envoi* of being, a dispensation or a gift of being and time, of the present and of representation. These *renvois* of traces or traces of *renvois* do not have the structure of representatives or of representations' (Derrida 1982:324). At one level they are like Latour's cascades. However, unlike the immutability of Labour's mobiles, these *renvois* mutate.

The mutability and multiplicity of *renvois* (so many different traces referring back to other traces) is analogous to improvisation in dance. A dance improvisation begins by referring back, to other dances, to other steps and movements. In the movement back, in the recall, the dancers move forward and the dance breaks open and divides and multiplies. It becomes a production, both a presence and a representation. Drawing could be similarly described. One begins by referring back: to the pedagogy of one's training, to the motif, to the imagination or whatever is. However in the movement back and forward, from looking up and down and looking back, recalling and doing, there emerges a multiplicity where many traces or marks refer back to other traces and the traces of others. In the process of doing, we find we are no longer in the grip of representation.

In Derrida's rethinking of representation as *renvois*, he argues that there is a need to think a 'history of Being, of sending Being on its way, no longer regulated or centred on representation' (Derrida 1982:313). If Derrida's rereading of the 're' of representation allows that power-of-bringing-back-to-presence, then it is possible to argue that representation renders possible a double articulation around what-is as presence *and* what-is as representation. This double articulation casts representation in a different light altogether. Instead

of creating fixity and indivisibility, representation sends on and on, and in the translation there is inevitable mutability. Derrida's apprehension produces an improvisation that is a double articulation, both presencing and representing.

To conclude this argument, I want to present an example that teases us with the duplicitous nature of representation. In sending out, there is bifurcation and in the *différance* there is, as Derrida puts it, 'a condition for there being a dispensation or a gift of Being and time, of the present and of representation' (Derrida 1982:324). This condition of possibility allows what-is to sometimes co-exist both as presence and as representation. Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida* (1981) furnishes me with this example. Barthes begins *Camera Lucida* with:

> One day, quite some time ago, I happened upon a photograph of Napoleon's youngest brother, Jerome, taken in 1852. And I realised with amazement I have not been able to lessen since: "I am looking at the eyes that looked at the Emperor". (Barthes 1981:3)

In this recognition, time had collapsed and Barthes was looking into the eyes of Napoleon's youngest brother *as well as* looking at a photograph of him. The 'gift' for Barthes was that the photograph was simultaneously apprehended as both presence and representation.

If there has been representation, Derrida thinks it may be because 'the *envoi* of being was originally menaced in its being together … by divisibility or dissension' (Derrida 1982:323). Rather than an invariable identity of sense, of unity, there is a movement of division, a bifurcation that continues to bifurcate and multiply ad infinitum. Thus Derrida re-iterates that, if there has been representation, it is because differentiation and division is stronger, strong enough to no longer guarantee, keep or save the sustaining sense of unity. (Derrida 1982: 323). Instead of closure, there is continual opening out. It is in the sending *(envoi)* that a double articulation gathers in and then differentiates.

Derrida's strategy of activating the process of sending is instructive when posed against the will to fixity that Heidegger argues is the condition of modernity. Sending, it has been argued, produces movement. It enables representation to extend as far as the too large and the too small of difference. Representation becomes engorged. It sheds it skin and keeps on multiplying. It is monstrous. Derrida's elaboration of *envois* and *renvois*, can be seen as a metaphor for what happens in practice. In demonstrating how engagement triggers a process of *différance*, he provides a critical link that enables us to go beyond representationalism.

The Ruin of Representation?[17]

If Derrida's lecture 'Sending: on Representation' is a defence of representation, we might well ask why he finds the need to substitute the terms *envoi* and *renvoi* for representation. Is the weight of its history so overpowering, that our continued use of the word representation proves unproductive? For Derrida, as I have argued, it is not a question of substitution, but rather an attempt to distil and demonstrate a condition that operates inside representation itself. Against Heidegger's position that the will to fixity and totalisation grounds representation, Derrida has presented us with the view that change is inherent to representation.[18] Deleuze, on the other hand, is not convinced. He suspects that change can not be effected if one continues to work within the representational frame. Unlike Derrida, he makes no defence of representation. He argues that new terms and processes, conducive to fluidity and movement, are needed to enable that conceptual change. Derrida's introduction of the terms *envois* and *renvois* could perhaps be seen to indicate this. In Deleuze's estimation, representation has ossified, become sedimented and fixed. He is committed to an ontology of change. In this endeavour, he pits the monstrous nature of repetition against the stability and hierarchy of representation (Olkowski 1999:24). Here we can return to the question of practice. In the repetitive nature of practice it is never a question of repetition of the same. Rather, as Deleuze argues, 'repetition produces only the same of that which differs' (Deleuze 1990:289). This monstrous logic is the logic of practice.

Whilst there are points of correspondence between Heidegger and Deleuze's critique of representation, particularly representation's will to fixity and indivisibility, there are also marked differences in their projects. Whilst Heidegger is concerned with ontology, Deleuze is intent on offering a pragmatics of action. I will return to discuss this difference in the final section of this Chapter; but firstly I want to sketch out Deleuze's opposition to what he calls 'organic representation'. I will use this critique to launch a different way of thinking about the work of art.

Deleuze, like Heidegger, identifies Platonism as preparing for, signalling and setting in chain the conditions for the advent of representation. However, for Deleuze it was Aristotle's metaphysics, which provided the framework that enabled representation. Whilst Plato's contribution was pivotal in enabling the world to become an image, he argues that it was Aristotle's structuring that enabled this image to establish its foundations.

As we have seen, it was within a theory of Ideas and Forms that Plato was

to make the critical distinction between the Idea (the model) and the copy. Deleuze argues that Plato's distinction established an *internal* relation between the model and the copy, not just one of appearance. In this schema, the copy stands in 'an internal, spiritual, noological and ontological relation with the idea or model' (Deleuze 1994a:264). Here Plato inaugurated a system of thinking that 'subordinated difference to instances of the Same, the Similar, the Analogous and the Opposed' (Deleuze 1994a:265).

In the transition to representation, a slippage in thinking occurred. The internal relation between model and copy was undone. The moral origin and presuppositions that mitigated the relations between model and copy were forgotten. All that remained through this forgetting was the relation of appearances. Earlier in this Chapter, we saw this relation operating in the designations 'natural attitude' and 'essential copy'. In this Aristotelian inspired mode of thinking, thought was covered over by an image overwhelmed by a schema (Deleuze 1994a:265). Deleuze suggests that it is this schema that is deployed in the world of representation. The schema entails a classificatory system built around appearances and predicated on the same, the similar, the analogous and the opposed. From Aristotle on, this schema shaped thought.

Aristotle's obsession with classification, enabled the heterogeneity of the image (word or visual) to be gathered up and organised as representation. Classification enables knowledge to be organised and ordered hierarchically. In all disciplines of knowledge, taxonomies or classificatory systems order knowledge. In biology this ordering takes the form of taxonomies of plants and animals, organised hierarchically in terms of increasing complexity. In anthropology, this taxonomy is realised through reference to lines of descent and affinity. In chemistry and geology it takes the form of chemical tables and, in the humanities and literature concepts are organised into dictionaries of words and thoughts.[19] All these taxonomies build on a framework where the key determinants are similarities or resemblances between things, ideas, shapes and colours. This system orders information. Deleuze has termed this system 'organic representation'.

In Deleuze and Guattari's theorisation, organic representation takes the form and structure of a tree. The tree with its roots, trunks, branches and leaves forms a solid indivisible whole. They note how odd it is that the tree has dominated western thought and systems of knowledge, from botany to biology, anatomy to anthropology. More sobering, from their point of view, is that this arborescent system has also dominated gnosiology, theology, ontology and all of philosophy (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:18). It also pervades the everyday.

Deleuze and Guattari contrast the arborescent structure underlying organic representation with the rhizome. In their thinking, the rhizome defies the classificatory tree-like structure that grounds and fixes thinking. The rhizome buds at any point, breaks off and keeps on budding and proliferating. In this way rhizomatic thinking is of a different order from representational thinking. The structure of the world-wide-web demonstrates how the rhizome works in the actual world. However, whilst it may be argued that the web is rhizomatic, I would suggest that the principles underpinning web site design are no different from those of other taxonomic systems. They involve categorisation and organisation of data according to the principles of representation. In this endeavour, hypertext and web designers organise data using the same principles that underpin the organisation of taxonomies of plants, animals, chemicals or words. Thus whilst the world-wide-web might offer us the possibility of escape from representation, it seems we need representational logic, at the outset, in order to enable us to negotiate it.

Similarly, whilst the process of art may defy representationalism, its categorisation in art history and art theory does not. As we have seen, the discipline of art history is founded on the fourfold function of identification, classification, evaluation and interpretation. It conforms to Aristotle's arborescent classificatory system.

Deleuze argues that the arborescent model operates according to the quatripartite structure of the same, the similar, the analagous and the opposed. This quatripartite framework can be exemplified by reference to the classificatory system we know so well, that of the family tree. The family tree is predicated upon principles of identity (I am a Bolt), resemblance (I look like my father), analogy (a family has its roots, trunks and branches) and opposition (you do not belong because you are not blood, you have no affiliations with my family and therefore have no place in my family).[20]

Aristotle's conceptualisation not only creates a hierarchy of thought and coherence, it also legitimises practices—visual, linguistic, social and political—that demand intelligibility, rigidity and hegemony. For example, family trees provide the rationale for family inheritance; social realism has tended to be adopted by totalitarian regimes as a model or ideal to be emulated, and political membership defines affiliation. For Deleuze, the Aristotelian model of organic representation – organised around identity, opposition, analogy, and resemblance—dominates most political, social, artistic, ethnic, economic, scientific, linguist, and philosophical practices (Olkowski 1999:20). Organic representation is consti-

tuted according to this four-part judgement in which difference is subordinated to identity, to resemblance, to the analogy of judgement and to the negative. Organic representation fixes and totalises. In this sense then, Deleuze's critique has strong resonances with the critique of representation found in 'The Age of the World Picture'.

Deleuze's particular critique of the Aristotelian metaphysical framework and its vehicle, the arborescent model of representation, is grounded in the elision of difference. In representation, he says, 'difference is subordinated by the thinking subject to the identity of the concept' (Deleuze 1994a:266). In order to classify objects, bodies, words, images or chemicals, this system begins with commonalities or similarities between things. Even when something is "classified" as being different, it is always seen as "different from". Difference is qualified in terms of what it is *not*. Olkowski notes that for Aristotle, 'difference is only allowed to exist in terms of identity with regard to a generic concept.' (Olkowski 1999:18). Difference as such is excluded from representation.

In Deleuze's puzzling, to think non-representationally involves thinking difference in itself. The problem is, that difference 'cannot be thought in itself, so long as it is subject to the requirements of representation' (Deleuze 1994a:262). It becomes the most difficult of problems to think difference differently or differentially. Can we ever think difference without thinking what it is different from? Deleuze's treatise, *Difference and Repetition* (1994a), is an attempt to do just that. Repetition with difference provides the key to his strategy and it is through practice that this can be demonstrated.

Defying the Gravitation of Representationalism

In the Aristotelian frame, Being and movement are in opposition.[21] In this formulation, there is no movement. Deleuze's approach to cracking open the circle of representation is pragmatic. He suspects that practice creates the movement and movement provides the key to breaking open the fixity of representation. It is not that representation can be expelled from the scene, but rather at the level of practice, representation can be set wobbling on its axis and can be toppled. Practice involves movement and movement involves setting things in process. Practice necessarily involves a process of becoming.

In practice, as we have seen, the work can take on a life of its own. This movement, suggests Deleuze, is:

> Capable of affecting the mind outside of all representation; it is a question of making movement itself a work, without interposition; of substituting direct signs for mediating representations; of inventing vibrations, rotations, whirlings, gravitations, dances or leaps which directly touch the mind. (Deleuze 1994a:8)

So what is this dynamic that enables vibrations, whirlings, gravitation, dances or leaps which directly touch the mind? How do you produce within a work, a movement capable of affecting the mind outside of all representation? Deleuze and Guattari argue it is when the molecular elements within a work produce 'lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:3). This is not chaos, but rather a configuration of speeds, accelerations, intensities and rupture. Such an image of thought, Olkowski claims, 'is necessary to the articulation of difference thought differentially and to the realization of mobility' (Olkowski 1999:27). Such an articulation of difference occurs in practice itself. Here the preconceptions about things are relinquished as the action establishes its own rhythm or logic.

Deleuze and Guattari suggest a pragmatic strategy for negotiating this flux. They begin with a recognition that we necessarily operate within the social formation. 'Lodge yourself on a stratum', they say, and 'experiment with the opportunities it offers' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:161). Once you have found an advantageous place from which to find potential moments for lines of flight, connect with them and surf them. They claim that it is only through a meticulous relation with the strata that one can succeed in freeing lines of flight. It is this success that can cause conjugated flows to pass and escape (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:161). If representation is a stratum, then it is true to say any line of flight from it, must begin with being well versed in its framework. It is also true that we must experiment with the opportunities it provides. However, once we have found potential places from which to launch lines of flight, it behoves us to leap off the stratum into the unknown.

However, Deleuze and Guattari caution us against too wild a destratification:

> If you blow apart the strata without taking precautions, then instead of drawing the plane you will be killed, plunged into a black hole, or even dragged toward catastrophe. Staying stratified—organised, signified, subjected—is not the worst that can happen; the worst that can happen is if you throw the strata into demented or suicidal collapse. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:161)

I want to slow down the speed for a moment and ponder how this might actually work in practice, given Olkowski's claim that the ruin of representation can be accomplished only on the level of actual practices (Olkowski 1999:25).

At the Level of Actual Practices

In researching and writing this book, I recognise that the allusions I make, the analogies I draw, the examples and the figures of speech I employ, situate me firmly in the regime of representation, both in Heideggerian and Deleuzian understandings of the term. And so I form a question. Isn't the very discipline involved in reading, note-taking and forming an argument representationalist from the start? I am required to find correspondences between my own thinking and the writings of relevant theorists working in my field. I identify with the ideas of other writers and find analogies between my ideas and the ideas of those writers. I seek out threads of resemblance that link my ideas with particular theoretical positions. I oppose my position to other stated positions. I garner evidence that will enable my position to hold in the face of opposition from other theories. The model of academic enquiry operates according to the logic of organic representation or representationalism. But is this all that happens?

Movements in knowledge suggest that something else is also happening. In referencing previous authors and theories, the aim is not merely to repeat them, but rather repeat them differently. This movement is itself *renvois,* 'a multiplicity of *renvois*, so many different traces referring back to other traces and to the traces of others' (Derrida 1982:324). In invoking *renvois*, is it possible to suggest that Derrida's elaboration of *renvois*, is the realisation of mobility as theorised by Deleuze? Can Derrida's notion of *différance* be equated with Deleuze's difference thought differentially? I think not. Derrida's movement is a condition *within* representation. Deleuze's difference operates in a different register and against the grain of representation.

Deleuze argues that to restore difference in thought, we need to first untie the knot which consists of 'representing difference through the identity of the concept and the thinking subject' (Deleuze 1994:266). So I go again to practice and to the process of working through this project. I dig up the notes I have made at different times when I didn't feel I had a fix on anything; when it appeared more as if representation had fled the scene altogether. In these moments my thinking took quite a different trajectory:

> I've been working solidly for three days. Never as much or as long as I want. This reading is so slow and I often seem to understand nothing.

> The words just make no sense at all. But does it matter? Does it really matter? It makes no sense at all. This morning there was nothing. Nowhere to go. No place to start. But one does as every day. Just sit down and start. Overcome the inertia. This is the advice Levinas gives. The effort to overcome inertia. One hour, two hours of struggling, of slow laborious reading and extensive note taking and the words swell around and engulf me. Then in the middle of something else—reading Rosalind Krauss about Duchamp, another stream starts flowing out and I have to write it out quickly before it evaporates and disappears as quickly as it appears. My rationale for rethinking performativity. Vicki Kirby's reworking of Derrida's provocation that there is nothing outside the text. And then as quick as it comes, it goes … it seems as if without leaving a trace in me … so, I have to write it out in haste, in shorthand:
>
> Duchamp… Manray… rayograph… photograms… grammatology…writing… and the connection with what I am reading Krauss as saying, "the image created is of the ghostly traces of departed objects". Here we have the intrusion of the "real" in representation … yes that is the connection … from Peirce to … the index … and Rosalind Krauss again. The rayograph or photogram makes explicit what is the case in all photography. It is the real. (Bolt 2000)

The passage is a passage of changing speeds and intensities. It isn't altogether logical. It isn't even necessarily grammatical. It was written in the heat of the moment. Cascades of words tumble out in a rush, one after the other and over the top of each other. It is the thinking that occurs in the middle of the night when one wakes and scribbles down words or images and that, the next day, are barely if at all legible. It is thinking without knowing. Derrida writes of this thinking without knowing or as he puts it, writing without seeing. And so I want to return and requote the citation given at the commencement of this Chapter:

> By accident, and sometimes on the brink of an accident, I find myself writing without seeing. Not with my eyes closed, to be sure, but open and disorientated in the night; or else during the day, my eyes fixed on something else, while looking elsewhere, in front of me, for example when at the wheel: I then scribble with my right hand a few squiggly lines on a piece of paper attached to the dashboard or lying on the seat beside me. Sometimes, still without seeing, on the steering wheel itself. These notations—unreadable graffiti—are for memory; one would later think them to be a ciphered writing. (Derrida 1993:3)

Derrida asks, 'what happens when one writes without seeing'? I am back on familiar territory for the moment. I think of Deleuze's concept of lines of flight. Dorothea Olkowski elaborates the process:

> Comparative rates of flow on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or on the contrary acceleration and rupture.... Turned toward lines of flight that are *movements* of "deterritorialization" and "destratification," ... the assemblage is dismantled as an organism. (Olkowski 1999:27)

Creativity involves becoming 'deterritorialized' and taking a line of flight. This flight is very fast, very intense and does not have time to coagulate in a representation. Being radically unstable, it takes on a life of its own. It is not linear but connects and disconnects as it takes up its flight.

As I pull the fragments together and align them with concepts, I am back in the realm of representational thinking; talking about a line of flight is not necessarily the same as taking one. In Derrida's musings, however, there is an oscillation between writing whilst seeing and this vertiginous line of flight that "happens" when one writes without seeing. This oscillation takes me back to his assertion that there is the possibility for there being an *envoi*, 'a dispensation of a gift of being and time of the present *and of representation'* (Derrida 1982:324; my emphasis). However, before we collapse back into Derrida's notions of *envoi* and *renvois*, it must be remembered that he posits 'sending' as a condition within representation itself. On the other hand, in Derrida's experience of writing without seeing, I would argue that something else is happening. I would go so far as to say that this experience is not of the representational type.

It is by 'accident, and sometimes on the brink of an accident' that Derrida finds himself writing without seeing (Derrida 1993:3). I want to pause for a moment and reflect on what this might mean. In western philosophy vision provides the key to the way we understand the world. Philosophy has developed around a dualistic conception of vision or sight. As I will show in Chapter Four, in this dualistic conception vision is conceived either as the observation with the two eyes of the body or as speculation with the eye of the mind.[22] It is these understandings of vision that underpin representationalist thought. In Derrida's scribblings, however, he neither sees with his eyes nor speculates with the eye of the mind. Derrida notes that he would later think these notations to be ciphered writing. That is true, but in the heat

of the moment these scribblings on the dashboard or on the steering wheel are not thought this way at all. It is as if there is an oscillation between two quite different ways of thinking.

Deleuze and Guattari identify this oscillation as the double articulation between the molar and the molecular. In their schema, the 'molar' can be exemplified by the great binary aggregates such as sex or class or, for the purpose of my argument, representation.[23] A molar structure has a rigid linear segmentarity. It is an arborescent structure. However, in their thinking, there is always something 'that flows or flees, that escapes the binary organization, the resonance apparatus, and the overcoding machine' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:216). This they term 'molecularization'. Thus as a molecular movement, 'singing or composing, painting and writing have no other aims than to unleash … becomings' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:275). Again, all becomings are molecular.

To provide an understanding of molecularity, they take the idea of mass and class and analyse its processes and relations. For them, mass is a molecular motion since it is not ordered and classified in any formal way. Class, on the other hand is a molar segmentarity. However, they note that classes are fashioned from masses. Classes are the crystallisation or sedimentation of a mass into a molarity. And in this sedimentation, they observe, masses constantly flow from classes (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:216).

The relation between molar and molecular is an oscillation or, as they would put it, a double articulation between stratification and destratification. They are at pains to point out that whilst they operate according to a different logic, they are inseparable; they coexist and cross over into each other (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:213). Thus:

> A molecular flow was escaping, minuscule at first, then swelling, without, however ceasing to be unassignable. The reverse, however, is also true: molecular escapes and movements would be nothing if they did not return to molar organizations. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:216-7)

The double articulation between molar moments and molecular movements can be exemplified in the process of drawing. Endowed with organs and functions, "I" am defined by my form. My form distinguishes me as a molar entity. A piece of charcoal, a pencil, a rubber, a can of fixative and sheet of paper are also molar entities. However, when these entities enter into composition with a landscape, a model or whatever, they transform and move towards the

molecular. Charcoal, body, rubber and paper enter an intense state, a state of varying movements of speed, hesitation, slowness and rest. My hand becomes charcoal marking the paper. Charcoal and speed and landscape become within the paper. The paper enters into composition with a frame and the picture-frame enters into composition within the gallery. The picture-frame-gallery enters into composition again and again in different ways and at different speeds with each viewer who enters into the space ad infinitum. There are moments when the work coalesces into a molarity such as in an interpretive moment. But even in the interpretative act, another flow escapes. This flow may be miniscule at first, but then it swells and escapes the frame. We are no longer completely in the realm of the Cartesian *subiectum* or the Heideggerian picture. In the process, the picture has fled the regime of representation.

In Paul Cézanne's *Still Life with Ginger Pot* (1888-90), the two modes of seeing and recording operate, creating a tension and upheaval in the work. Tilted surfaces, trembling jugs, heaving sugar bowls, a mismatched table top and collapsing chairs may be attributed to poor drawing skills or more often to a wilful distortion of the tradition of western illusionism. In line with the latter argument, Michael Howard suggests that Cézanne's manipulation of forms is quite conscious:

> These objects are presented to the viewer with a complete disregard for the traditional rules of perspective. The wicker basket laden with fruit is precariously balanced on the corner of the table; next to it a ginger jar is in a similar predicament. The size of the objects seem to swell or diminish at the artist's will, according to their function within the composition. (Howard 1990:116)

Given Cézanne's doubt at his ability to realise, however, I wonder whether Cézanne's will and consciousness were so strongly controlling and ordering. Instead, I would like to suggest that this work exemplifies the oscillation between the molar and the molecular. In this process, instead of creating visual intelligibility and coherence, Cézanne sets in motion a perpetual disequilibrium, which makes the whole visual system heave. It makes it "stutter".

I would argue that the transformation that occurs in art is the result of this 'becoming molecular'. Yves-Alain Bois describes the work of Cézanne, germinating under our eyes both as a molecular surface and a depicted object. For him, the molecular process evident in Cézanne's work:

> Is not simply additive, but multiplying. His works are geologically constructed of layers, or rather levels, of skeins of molecules more or less loose, each skein responding both to the ones that precede it and to the whiteness of the support. None of these levels entirely fuses with the others … the atoms must remain identifiable as such…. Cézanne's works cancel the linearity of time; they breathe. (Bois 1988:39)

These two interpretations provide us with a moment, when movement is coalesced into a molarity. Bourdieu points out the dilemma of interpretation. Interpretation, he says, is concerned with providing coherence to a mass of primary experience. It is a grouping of material that is ordered to give a coherent account of those experiences and facts. It is a construction (Bourdieu 1990:10-11). Interpretation tends to operate according to representational logic, not the logic of practice.

In Deleuze's theorisation, representation is a molar formation. According to Massumi, it is 'a system of image production whose elements are signs (arrested images, images as evaporative meaning effects) grasped as wholes composed of working parts, between which analogical relations are established by rhetorical transference—metaphor, synecdoche, allegory—any "figurative" meaning machine' (Massumi 1992:192). For Deleuze and Guattari, representation belongs to the molar.

However, against the idea that a molarity is forever, Deleuze and Guattari envisage that there is movement between molarities. Molarities are not forever bounded and fixed. Whilst the interpretive moment may be a molarisation, there will always be another flow. This flow may be miniscule at first, but then it may swell and escape the frame. What is important to note is that molar systems are in constant motion between one state or degree of molarity and another. As Deleuze and Guattari note:

> Between substantial forms and determined subjects, between the two, there is not only the whole operation of demonic local transports but a natural play of haecceities, degrees, intensities, events, and accidents that composed individuations totally different from those of the well-formed subjects that receive them. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:253)

The movement between substantial forms and determined subjects is a movement of the molecular. In their assertion that all becomings are already molecular, Deleuze and Guattari claim to extricate becoming from the regime of

representation.[24] For them, becoming is not of the order of imitation or identification. It is not a question of establishing formal relations, nor is it analogy. Its relations are relations of movement, 'not imitation of a subject nor proportionality of a form' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:272).

Against the horizontal and the vertical lines of the grid of organisation, Deleuze and Guattari pose the diagonal. Every artist "knows intuitively" that the diagonal is a line of movement and instability. It is easy to lie horizontally or stand vertically, but very much harder to orientate yourself diagonally. Attempt this and you will fall! In the schema of the grid of organisation, creation is the mutant line, the diagonal. It detaches itself from 'the task of representing a world' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:296). For Deleuze, the work of art can leave the domain of representation in order to become experience.

Counter-representationalism

But what is it that takes us out of ourselves, so to speak, so that the work of art leaves the domain of representation to become experience? Heidegger's conceptualisation of praxical knowledge or handlability, as first developed in *Being and Time* (1927), supports the argument that it is through the handling of materials, methods, tools and ideas in practice, that art becomes experience. Thus it is at the level of eyes and hands that the work of art escapes from the frame of representationalism.

According to Immanuel Levinas, Heidegger's account of man's being-in-the-world contrasts with the kind of setting-before that characterises representation. Levinas argues that in Heidegger's conceptualisation of handlability, he transports us away from notions of the self-conscious subject and offers a relation of a totally different order from the representationalist conception of as man-as-subject in relation to objects. In order to understand this different mode of being in the world, Levinas points to Heidegger's conception of beings as *Dasein*. *Dasein*, meaning being-right-there, encapsulates the experience of beings always already in the middle of things.[25]

For Heidegger, the drama of human existence is orientated around the possibilities that being-in-the-world throws up. We are thrown into the midst of life. In this 'thrownness' (*Geworfenheit*), we are always already in the middle of possibility. Being in the middle of things, it is in use, not in consciousness, that we have access to things. Levinas summarises this state of affairs in relation to tools:

> Tools are thus objects that Dasein reveals by a given mode of its existence—handling. Tools are not then simply "things." Handling is in some way the affirmation of their being. Handling determines not what tools are but the manner in which they encounter Dasein, the manner in which they are…. And it is precisely because handling does not follow upon a representation that handlability is not a simple "presence" [présence] (vorhandenheit) on which a new property is grafted. Handlability is entirely irreducible. (Levinas 1996:19-20)

Radically, Martin Heidegger argues that it is not consciousness that forms the basis of our understanding. He proposes that we do not come to know the world theoretically through contemplative knowledge in the first instance. Rather, we come to know the world theoretically, only after we have come to understand it through handling. Faced with what is thrown up during this handling, possibility is seized in its very possibility. Acts and decisions occur in the heat of the moment and not as the result of rational logic. Levinas observes that this way of being thrown towards one's own possibilities is, for Heidegger, a crucial moment of understanding (Levinas 1996: 24-25).

When Heidegger talks of understanding, he is not referring to understanding as a cognitive faculty that is imposed on existence. Understanding is the care that comes from handling, of being thrown into the world and dealing with things. Levinas notes that the originality of Heidegger's conception of existence lies in positing a relation that is not centred on the self-conscious subject. He says 'in contrast to the traditional idea of "self-consciousness" [*conscience interne*], this self-knowledge, this inner illumination, this understanding … refuses the subject/object structure' (Levinas 1996:23). This relation of care is not the relation of a knowing subject and an object known. It defies the logic of representationalism.

Of what "use" is this insight? I want to return to my earlier struggle to come to grips with the complex theoretical understandings, required to progress this project. I suggested that the research process itself could be conceived of as representationalist. For example, when I first read Heidegger's work, I would try to fit it into preconceived categories in my endeavour to "grasp the meaning". However this approach changed as I handled his writings. Reading Heidegger is one thing. However it has been through my concernful dealings with his ideas that I have come to understand them. Just as one cannot understand the potential of pots of paint, bundles of brushes and rolls of canvas just by looking at them, neither is anything revealed by just looking at

the printed word. Our concernful dealings with ideas constitute the work of philosophy and the work of conceptual art just as the concernful dealings with brushes, paint and canvas, ideas or motif, constitute the work of painting. Seen from the perspective of handlability, then, even the research process can be cast in a very different light. In working with Heidegger's texts, I came to understand his project, in the Heideggerian sense of handlability.

The *Theatre* of Practice

It would seem that representation is too pervasive to be merely suspended or bracketed out. If this is the case, then perhaps our efforts will be forever caught up in reflecting upon the limits of representation. It has been in the dialogue between art and philosophy that these limits have come under sustained critique and a great deal of effort has gone into bringing about the 'ruin of representation'.[26] In the visual arts, as Dorothea Olkowski has observed, postmodern artists have consciously worked to subvert, disperse and counter its system of mastery (Olkowski 1999:105). However, I wonder whether we have in fact become too self-conscious, that is representationalist, in our quest to ruin representation? Perhaps we need to approach the task in quite a different manner.

Deleuze's proposition—that modern art is a 'veritable *theatre* of metamorphoses and permutations, which actually leaves the domain of representation in order to become experience,' (Deleuze 1983:56), becomes a provocation that shifts this self-conscious critique. For Deleuze it is practice that realises this movement (Olkowski 1999:26). I believe that it is in the assertion that practice realises movement, that we can begin the task of unravelling the knot that representationalism holds on our comprehension of the work of art.

My task in this Chapter has been to take up this provocation and to demonstrate how, through practice, the work of art may realise a movement that leaves the domain of representation altogether. I would suggest that in practice we can never predict what will happen in advance. Rather, it is through the encounter between tools, materials, knowledges, objects and bodies that movement happens. The work of art *is* this movement. And, this movement, says Levinas, 'gains access to objects not only in an *original* way, but also in an *originary* way; the movement does not *follow upon* a representation' (Levinas 1996:19). In the flux of practice, we grope towards an understanding that is not representational. Acts and decisions occur in the heat of the moment and not as the result of rational logic. Such knowing operates at the

level of hands and eyes and operates in a different register from the representational paradigm of man-as-subject in relation to mere objects. We do not set forth the things that we encounter and place them in relation to ourselves, but rather we work in the "heat of the moment" and in relation to tools and materials to produce movement. In this way art is not necessarily a representational practice.

2

CONTINGENCY AND THE EMERGENCE OF ART

I have so far asserted that Heidegger's elaboration of handlability, or what he comes to term equipmentality, provides a key to rethinking the conditions of possibility of creative practice. I have suggested that this form of understanding, with the 'hands and eyes', operates in a different register from the representational paradigm of man-as-subject in relation to objects. Handling is a relation of care and concernful dealings, not a relation where the world is set before us (knowing subjects) as an object. It does not set forth the things that we encounter and place them in an epistemic relation to self. In proposing that it is through use that we come to understand the Being of tools, Heidegger's work on handlability enables us to rethink the relation that we have come to know as artistic practice. In this relationship, the work of art is the particular understanding that is realised though our concernful dealings with the tools and materials of production.

Heidegger's assertion that handlability or equipmentality does not follow upon representational logic provided the first critical turn in my attempt to rethink the work of art as practice. In his later essay 'The Question Concerning Technology' (1954), Heidegger makes another and, in my opinion, more radical move which enables us to recast the relations between artist, materials and tools altogether. In this essay he questions the contemporary instrumentalist understanding of the human-tool relationship—using tools and materials as a means to an end—and in a challenge to this relationship of mastery, posits one of co-responsibility and indebtedness. In a reversal of the causal chain of means and ends, artist, objects, materials and processes are posited as co-responsible for the emergence of art. In this reversal, Heidegger recasts our everyday understanding of causality. Tools are no longer conceived of as a means to an end, but rather are co-responsible (along with other elements) for bringing forth something into appearance.

In this Chapter, I bring this refiguration of the tool-human relationship to

bear on our understanding of the complex relationship between humans, objects, tools and materials in artistic production. In the relation of care that characterises production, the artist or craftsperson is no longer the sole creator or master of the work of art. Argued from this perspective, artistic practice shows us that the artist's relation with her/his tools is no longer one of mastery, nor is it instrumentalist. Rather, the artist is co-responsible for bringing art forward into appearance. Artistic practice involves a particular responsiveness to, or conjunction with, other contributing elements that make up the particular art ensemble. For Heidegger, this conjunction can set something free and start it 'on its way into arrival' (Heidegger 1977a:9). In the process of making art, it is art in itself that is set on its way. Through this dynamic and productive relation, art emerges as a revealing. According to this conception, then, each event or occasioning, involves a unique encounter of inexhaustible complexity that can neither be known in advance nor predicted. Art figured this way is neither representationalist, nor is it mastery.

Technological Revealing as Enframing

Heidegger most cogently develops his understanding of handlability, or what he later comes to term equipmentality, in *Being and Time*. Whilst Levinas recognised that concrete handling enables us to develop a counter representationalist view of the world, Heidegger's original formulation of handlability, suggests a more instrumentalist apprehension of tools. In his rendering of the human-tool relationship, tools are conceived of as existing in-order-to. Tools are set to use in-order-to achieve a particular end. Seen this way, production is thought instrumentally.

In his later essay 'The Question Concerning Technology', Heidegger is much less sure about the liberation provided by an equipmental view of the world. Heidegger's ambivalence stems from a human "will to mastery". Through this will, says Heidegger, man sets the world in place as a resource. As *subiectum*, techno-calculative man orders this resource to achieve his own ends. In this schema the tool is conceived of as an instrument, ready-to-hand (*Zuhanden*), for use by man. The tool is a means to an end. In this instrumental view of the tool, man focuses on what tools can do for him, not on the manner in which they are. Heidegger's own ambivalence towards the human-tool relationship suggests it is important to tease out his arguments concerning technology.

In 'The Question Concerning Technology', Heidegger sets out to worry our commonsense assumptions and understandings of technology. He re-

quires us to reassess our relation to technology so that we can perhaps develop a different relationship with it. For Heidegger, it is clear that technology, in its material manifestation as tools, equipment and instruments is not equivalent to the essence of technology. In Heidegger's estimation, so long as we represent the world as a resource, and technology as an instrument in-order-to achieve our ends, 'we will remain transfixed in the will to master it' (Heidegger 1977a:32). In this fixation with technology as a means to an end, the later Heidegger is adamant that man fails to understand that the essence of technology does not lie at all in the making. The essence of technology, says Heidegger, lies in the revealing:

> Technology is therefore no mere means. Technology is a way of revealing. If we give heed to this, then another whole realm for the essence of technology will open itself up to us…. Technology comes to presence [*West*] in the realm where revealing and unconcealment takes place, where *alētheia*, truth happens. (Heidegger 1977a:12-13)

In his assessment, however, human beings tend to get caught up in the technological (in the ontic realm of things), without giving due attention to the essence of technology. The problem for a modern technophilic society is how to access the essence of technology when we are so caught up in what it can do for us. According to Heidegger, this has produced deleterious effects in the world.

Written between 1949 and 1954, against the background of the social and political reality of post-war Germany, 'The Question Concerning Technology' can be seen as a response to the devastation of the human use of technology as a means to an end.[1] His concern is to rethink this relation and instead promote a free relation between human existence and technology. This quest should not be confused with affirming or promoting technology as a means to an end. Rather his concern, in questioning technology, is to enable human existence to open to the essence of technology, so that we are able to 'experience the technological within its own bounds … [and are not] delivered over to it in the worst possible way' (Heidegger 1977a:4).

Heidegger begins his questioning of technology by stating what is assumed as commonsense. Technology is both a means to an end *and* a human activity. He continues:

> The manufacture and utilization of equipment, tools, and machines, the manufactured and used things themselves, and the needs and ends that they serve, all belong to what technology is. (Heidegger 1977a:4)

Who would ever deny that technology was an instrument or a means to an end or that technology was a human activity? It is so uncannily correct, says Heidegger, that it holds for modern technology as well as for older handwork technology. He comments that if we can obtain the right relation with technology, we 'will "get" technology "spiritually at hand." We will master it' (Heidegger 1977a:5).

Heidegger's rhetorical questioning unsettles the presumption of the instrumental definition of technology. What if technology were not merely a means to an end established by human beings? How would this sit with the will to mastery displayed by humans? What if technology were not about the use of tools, machines and computers by humans? What if technology were instead conceived of as a way of revealing? How then might this change our thinking concerning the relationship with the technological, whether it is a computer, a hammer, a video camera or a paintbrush? And, more to the point, what stops us from questioning in this manner?

Heidegger argues that modern man's representationalist thinking forecloses our capacity to think any other way. In order to provide a context for this discussion, I wish to summarise my earlier overview of Heidegger's critique of representation and provide the link between representationalism and our current habit of becoming caught in the merely ontic world of things. For Heidegger, as I have argued, representation traps us in a mode of thought that insists on grasping reality through imposed conceptual structures. In representational thinking, he suggests, there begins 'that way of being human which mans the realm of human capability as a domain given over to measuring and executing for the purpose of gaining mastery over that which is as a whole' (Heidegger 1977a:132). Human beings become the self-conscious shapers and guarantors of all that comes to them from outside of them. Under the sovereignty of representation, to be human is no longer to be open to what-is, but rather to become caught up in a quest to get things under control.

For Heidegger, it is the particular mode of technological revealing that enables the hegemony of representation to maintain sovereignty. Under this regime, objects are reduced to standing-reserve and, as such, they are available to some ends as destined by modern representing humans. In this schema, objects are ordered and reduced to their readiness for use. The consequence of the transformation of the world into standing-reserve is that the earth is viewed as a resource which humans dominate through technology. In this way, notes art theorist Matthew Biro, 'the richness and variety of a thing is replaced by a reduced set of properties: the thing's use value as well as its position in a global network of transformation and exchange' (Biro 1998:201).

The ordering that reduces objects to standing-reserve belongs to the dominion or sovereignty of *Ge-stell* (enframing). In Heidegger's thinking, this enframing constitutes the essence of modern technology. Enframing, like the much favoured *poiëtic* revealing, to be discussed later in this Chapter, is one form of a being's mode of coming to presence. However, unlike *poiëtic* revealing, enframing does not allow the Being of a thing to be brought forth into appearance. Rather, it is a 'challenging setting-upon *(Stellen),* which sets everything in place as supply', for use by human beings (Heidegger 1977a:21).

The technological mode of revealing, as enframing, views the world as standing-reserve and places man in the position of ordering it. In this challenging-revealing, nature is transformed into energy that can be stored and used as a means to an end. In this mode:

> A tract of land is challenged into the putting out of coal and ore. The earth now reveals itself as a coal-mining district, the soil as mineral deposit.… Agriculture is now the mechanized food industry. Air is now set upon to yield nitrogen, the earth to yield ore, ore to yield uranium, for example; uranium is set upon to yield atomic energy, which can be released either for destruction or for peaceful use. (Heidegger 1977a:14-15)

Heidegger cautions that conceiving and setting up the world in the mode of enframing is a dangerous thing. The danger that lurks concerns its relations to destining.

Destining (*Geschick*) means to send or start something on its way. For Heidegger, it is a 'sending-that-gathers [*versammelde Schicken*] which first starts man upon a way of revealing' (Heidegger 1977a:24). Once set in place and set on its way, a particular mode of destining gathers momentum and multiplies. The danger of enframing as a mode of destining is that, as it multiplies and takes hold of human consciousness, it threatens to foreclose every other mode of revealing. Its exponential expansion, as the only way of revealing, endangers man's relationship to himself and to everything else. Thus in Heidegger's estimation, enframing as a mode of ordering and revealing is the supreme danger. He notes that:

> This danger attests itself to us in two ways. As soon as what is unconcealed no longer concerns man even as object, but does so, rather exclusively as standing-reserve, and man in the midst of objectlessness is nothing but the orderer of the standing-reserve, then he comes to the very brink of a precipitous fall; that is, he comes to the point where he

> himself will have to be taken as standing-reserve. Meanwhile man, precisely as the one so threatened, exalts himself to the posture of lord of the earth. (Heidegger 1977a:27)

Heidegger talks about this precipitous fall in which man is reduced to standing-reserve, by referring to that mode of being that reduces beings to becoming mere resources. As mere resources, the potential for human beings to understand their own Being becomes lost.

Human beings so easily succumb to this danger, since it enhances their power over nature (including other humans) and it confirms their position as 'lord of the earth'. It gives humans the capacity to unlock the powers inherent in nature and use them as a means to an end. Thus technological revealing allows humans to extend their vision further into nature and extend their mastery. Thus we talk, for example, of human resources and human resource management.

In contemporary culture, this habit of reducing man to a mere resource finds its nemesis in the activity of corporate-head hunting and the commodification of popstars, filmstars, artists and sports stars. These celebrities become mere resources, used as a means to promote and sell other products. Artists are not exempt from this reduction to standing reserve. Josephine Starrs and Leon Cmielewski have observed that:

> Artists are like popstars, the more famous and controversial the more likely they are to sell their work. And now there are billboards at Heathrow airport of Tracey Emin selling Bombay Sapphire Gin. First artists become products to be promoted and, then when famous enough they can be used to sell other products. (Starrs and Cmielewski 2000:8)

Heidegger warns of the supreme danger that this way of being exemplifies. Where enframing holds sway, Heidegger claims it drives out every other possibility of revealing. Revealing becomes characterised by a regulating and securing of standing-reserve (Heidegger 1977a:27). And in this mode of revealing, man is in danger of apprehending nothing apart from what is revealed in ordering. This ordering becomes the standard on which everything is based. Heidegger's explication of standing-reserve provides a gloomy prognosis of the fate that awaits humanity.

In its seductive power, as a destining of revealing, enframing threatens to foreclose every other mode of revealing. Whilst we accumulate more and more things, we become totally distracted from the task of understanding our Be-

ing. However, whilst enframing provides modern man with a seductive way of being, Heidegger contends that it is not a fate that compels humans to obey. He argues that whilst we are under the sway of enframing, this destining 'in no way confines us to a stultified compulsion to push on blindly with technology or … rebel against it as the work of the devil' (Heidegger 1977a:26). If humans recognise the danger of the totalizing power of enframing, they become open to the potential of other modes of revealing. In this recognition, Heidegger argues, comes the saving.

The challenge is for humans to grope towards a different mode of revealing, one that no longer positions every being, including human be-ings, as standing reserve. Heidegger is of the opinion that if we are open to the essence of technology and if we recognise that technological revealing is also a concealing, then we are in a good position to be 'unexpectedly taken into a freeing claim' (Heidegger 1977a:26). For Heidegger the saving power comes in the mode of aesthetic revealing. He believes that aesthetic revealing as *poiēsis* can preserve humans from the danger of the particular technological revealing that is enframing.

The Ambivalence of *Technē*

In the mid 1980s the German artist Anselm Kiefer set up his studio in an old factory and proceeded to run his workshop according to factory-like modes of production. He engaged specialized labour power and developed technologically intensive production techniques to enable him to produce series of large-scale works. At one level, it could be argued that Kiefer illustrates a case where art seems to operate in the realm of enframing.[2] The scale of the operation and the employment of quasi-mass production methods parallel industrial production, and yet for Kiefer, there is a difference. For him, the factory became the symbol for the site of artistic practice as opposed to industrial capitalism. The materials and tools of production were not conceived as standing-reserve. Kiefer did not see himself as engaged in industrial production, but rather as an alchemist engaged in a process of transformation. In this role, Biro observes that Kiefer figured himself as 'a quasi-religious, quasi-scientific figure who labours to release the transformative potential in the materials upon which he works' (Biro 1998:209).[3] In other words, Kiefer's work is not representationalist.

The blurring of the boundaries between art production and other forms of production, illustrated in Kiefer's practice, has raised many questions about the nature and role of art in contemporary society. From a Heideggerian position, it questions the Being of art. This has become especially so where an artwork might look like any product of mass production.[4] If Kiefer is concerned with

the transformative potential of the material upon which he works, how does this differ from the instrumental definition of technology? What makes his labours so different from the 'unlocking, transforming, storing and distributing and switching about' that, according to Heidegger, is characteristic of technological revealing (Heidegger 1977a:16)? How is the aesthetic revealing of Kiefer any different from enframement?

For Heidegger, the answer lies in the fact that art does not take the world simply as a means, as something to be used. Art proliferates possibilities, rather than reducing them. In order to argue this position, Heidegger uses a philosophical strategy that characterises much of his later philosophy. He returns to us to the ancient Greeks as a starting point for developing his concept of aesthetic revealing. In the thinking of the ancient Greeks, Heidegger detects particular movements and understandings that offer humans a way out of, or beyond technological calculating representation, or representationalism. In 'The Age of the World Picture', we are brought to an apprehension of Being as presencing. In 'The Question Concerning Technology', Heidegger develops the idea of *technē* as *poiēsis*.

Poiēsis, like enframing, is a mode of being's coming to presence. However, Heidegger clearly differentiates between the two modes. Whilst enframing concerns an ordering and mastery over what-is *poiēsis* involves openness before what-is. As we saw in the first Chapter, the openness before what-is, relates to the ancient Greek understanding of presencing. It is a bringing forth or unconcealment of Being. Heidegger observes that for Plato, 'every occasion for whatever passes over and goes forward into presencing from that which is not presencing is *poiēsis,* is bringing-forth' (Heidegger 1977a:10).

The bringing-forth that ensues with *poiēsis* is quite different from the bringing of whatever is before oneself as an object, characteristic of representation and technological revealing. Whilst the bringing forth of enframing is an ordering, this is not at all the case with *poiēsis*. *Poiēsis* is a bringing forth of something out of itself. Heidegger notes that:

> Bringing-forth brings hither out of concealment forth into unconcealment. Bringing-forth comes to pass only insofar as something concealed comes into unconcealment. This coming rests and moves freely within what we call revealing [*das Entbergen*]. (Heidegger 1977a:11-12)

The Greeks use the word *alētheia* for such unconcealment or revealing.

Heidegger proposes that *physis* or the revealing that occurs in nature is *poiēsis* in its highest sense (Heidegger 1977a:10). He cites the bursting forth of a blossom into bloom as an example of *physis* and contrasts this bringing forth of something out of itself, with the bringing forth of art:

> What is bought forth by the artisan or the artist, e.g., the silver chalice, has the bursting open belonging to bringing-forth not in itself, but in another (*en allōi*), in the craftsman or the artist. (Heidegger 1977a:10-11)

To that bringing forth that belongs to the bringing forth of the artist or artisan, Heidegger designates the term *technē.* In his introduction to Heidegger's essay, Lovitt explains that in *technē,* 'through art and handcraft, man participated in conjunctions with other contributing elements—with "matter", "aspect", and "circumscribing bounds"—in the bringing forth of a thing into being' (Lovitt in Heidegger 1977a:xxiv).

Technē is a particular form of bringing forth that appears to vacillate between *poiēsis* and enframing. Where *technē* belongs to bringing forth as revealing, Heidegger notes, it is *poiētic* (Heidegger 1977a:13). However, when understood as the term for the activities and skills of the craftsman, *technē* comes to be seen in an instrumental way. It is a means to an end. If thought instrumentally, *technē* assumes the character of a controlling revealing. It is this tendency towards control and mastery that establishes the ambivalence of *technē.* Further, in Heidegger's estimation, it is this tendency that ushers in the modern technological age. And thus:

> The revealing that holds sway throughout modern technology does not unfold into a bringing-forth in the sense of *poiēsis.* The revealing that rules in modern technology is a challenging [*Herausfordern*], which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy that can be extracted and stored as such. (Heidegger 1977a:14)

The difference between *technē* as *poiēsis* and *technē* as enframing is exemplified in a discussion in which Heidegger contrasts two different usages of the title "The Rhine". In the first example, that of modern technology, "The Rhine" is a river damned up to supply power. In the second example, "*The Rhine*" is the title of one of Hölderlin's hymns. Heidegger argues that where "The Rhine" is damned for man's use as water power supply, it is a challenging-forth. This challenging forth takes place in the following way:

> The energy concealed in nature is unlocked, what is unlocked is transformed, what is transformed is stored up, what is stored up is, in turn, distributed, and what is distributed is switched about ever anew. Unlocking, transforming, storing, distributing, and switching about are ways of revealing. (Heidegger 1977a:16)

The character of this revealing is one of regulation. Here "The Rhine" is seen in its capacity to be regulated and secured merely for man's use.

In contrast, the revealing in Hölderlin's hymn "*The Rhine*" is not a revealing limited by such regulation. On the contrary, the work of art brings "The Rhine" into appearance. *Technē*, as *poiēsis*, sets "The Rhine" free. It opens up this possibility or that. It is not determined. Thus it could be argued that the work of art *is* the setting of "The Rhine" on its way into arrival. The contrast between *technē* as enframing and *technē* as *poiēsis* is starkly laid out in this example. Whilst Hölderlin's hymn enables a free relation and starts something on its way, the challenging forth of the former offers a determined relation of ordering and regulating.

Heidegger is emphatic: so long as we represent technology as an instrument, we will retain our will to master it. The problem of *technē* as enframing is that objects and equipment become absorbed into the totality of standing-reserve and even lose their character as objects. They become subject to the law of orderability and substitutability. In this relation or mode of revealing, the machine (whether it is a computer, a paint brush, a potter's wheel, a pencil or a hammer) derives its Being from its orderability as standing reserve. As standing-reserve it cannot blossom into bloom as itself.

Heidegger argues that modernity is characterised by a mode of grasping the world as an object. It is enframing, as a mode of revealing, that enables this to happen. Enframing, as I have argued, is characterised by a way of thinking that sees things as a means to an end. In the collapse of the technological apparatus with standing-reserve, the relationship of humans to their tools becomes one of mastery. But here we need to stop and ponder. What if the relationship between human be-ings and their technological apparatus were a responsive one rather than a mastering one?

For Heidegger, this different being-in-the-world would signal the end of modernity. No longer would tools be ready at hand for use by man in-order-to. The question is whether this different mode of relating to the world is possible. In order to think a different relation to technology, Heidegger posits

poiēsis. In turning to *poiēsis* as a different and saving mode of revealing, however, he remains strangely silent as to what the relationship between human beings and technological apparatus would be in this case. If the essence of technology is nothing technological and if *poiēsis* is a manifold revealing, what might this relationship be? In this mode of revealing, surely tools would not be ready-to-hand or standing-reserve in-order-to. How then, might we see them? Heidegger is quite clear in declaring that *poiēsis* as a mode of the Being of beings, is characterised by an emergent quality, rather than constituting a knowing in advance.

Casting Technology as *Technē*

Where technology is conceived in terms of *technē* as *poiēsis*, another mode of revealing presents itself. In his attempt to refigure technology in terms of *technē* as *poiēsis*, Heidegger returns to the etymology of the word technology. Heidegger tells us that the modern term "technology" is derived from the Greek word *technikon*. '*Technikon* means that which belongs to *technē*' (Heidegger 1977a:12). Heidegger traces the use of *technē* and points to an historical linkage with *epistēmē*. In contemporary understandings, we recognize *epistēmē* as the root of epistemology; that is, the study of, or the theory of knowledge. Seen together, *technē* and *epistēmē* are concerned broadly with knowing. For Heidegger knowing is an opening up.

However, so as not to collapse *technē* into *epistēmē*, Heidegger asserts that as an opening up, *technē* is a revealing. And, as a mode of revealing, *technē* is a place where *alētheuein* (revealing) happens. In contrast with *epistēmē*, *technē* as *alētheuein* does not set knowledge before us as an object of study. Rather *technē*:

> Reveals whatever does not bring itself forth and does not yet lie before us, what ever can look and turn out now one way and now another. Whoever builds a house or a ship or forges a sacrificial chalice reveals what is to be brought forth. (Heidegger 1977a:13)

Understood in terms of its character as a mode of revealing *(alētheuein), technē* is not concerned with means and ends, nor is it concerned with mere making, manipulating, modelling or manufacturing. Thus argued as *technē*, technology can be conceived as a bringing-forth, as *poiēsis*. Technology is a mode of revealing:

> Technology comes to presence [*West*] in the realm where revealing and unconcealment take place, where *alētheia*, truth, happens. (Heidegger 1977a:13)

In following through his argument, Heidegger makes the point that, for the Greeks, *technē* was not just reserved for the activities and the skills of the craftsman. *Technē* was a term that was also applied to the fine arts. It is in fine arts rather than craft that Heidegger seeks redemption for technology as *technē*. This exalting of fine art becomes evident in the conclusion of the essay:

> What was art—perhaps only for that brief but magnificent age? Why did art bear the modest name *technē*? Because it was a revealing that brought forth and made present and therefore belonged within *poiēsis*. It was finally that revealing which holds complete sway in all the fine arts, in poetry, and in everything poetical that obtained *poiēsis* as its proper name. (Heidegger 1977a:34)

As a mode of revealing or bringing forth, fine art as *technē* belongs within the realm of *poiēsis*. Heidegger considers this mode of revealing as much richer and freer than the mode of revealing offered by enframing. His bias is unmistakeable. As Ihde points out, Heidegger revives *technē* as art, so as to broaden and enrich technological revealing (Ihde 1979:115).[5]

The development of Heidegger's work on modes of revealing raises a fundamental question. Where being-in-the-world is characterised by an enframing revealing, how do other modes of revealing—for example a *poiētic* revealing—enable an escape from the frame of enframing? It would seem that technological revealing has come to suit modern humans. *Dasein*, fallen, is so caught up in the everyday activities of 'unlocking, transforming, storing, distributing and switching about' (Heidegger 1977a:16), that it has forgotten that there are any other possibilities for Being other than this enframing mode of Being. Where the ordering of the world enables human beings to accumulate more and more things, where the dollar is the master attractor, what value does a *poiētic* understanding offer? What can convince humans of the enriched revealing of *poiēsis*? What would induce humans to value technology as *poiētic*, rather than pursue technology as a means to an end for human benefit? As I will show in the next section, this revaluation involves developing a very different relationship to technology.

Praxis

In order to re-evaluate our relation to technology, I want to return to Heidegger's understanding of handlability or equipmentality as developed in his tool analysis in *Being and Time*. It is through his analysis of the human-tool relationship that we may find a different relationship to technology. Heidegger's

tool analysis needs to be contextualised in terms of his understanding of what it is to be in the world. As I have shown in the previous Chapter, for Heidegger, the drama of human existence is orientated around the possibilities that being-in-the-world throws up. In his phenomenology, the world is not the objective world of things and places, but rather the world is that into which *Dasein* is thrown.

As we saw in Chapter One, Heidegger reserves the term *Dasein,* for the fundamental fact of being-right-there that characterises being thrown into the middle of things.[6] This is the drama of human existence. Thus, it is not things in themselves or entities which constitute the experience of the world, but rather the world is discovered through *Dasein*'s involvement with it. This constitutes what Heidegger terms the worlding of the world. This involvement or relationship with the world underpins the primarily praxical nature of being in the world. It is through concernful dealings with or handling of things, that the nature of the world is revealed to beings.

According to Ihde, Heidegger's tool analysis is the vehicle by which Heidegger elaborates how the 'worldhood of the world is made phenomenologically apparent (Ihde 1979:116). Through this analysis we gain an apprehension of the shape accorded to the human-tool ensemble. It is through our concernful dealings with things that the world is revealed to us.

Heidegger's model of how the world is already discovered through the use of a piece of equipment is orientated around a constellation of praxical terms. For Heidegger, the primary dealings we have with the world are those things that we put to use. He says:

> The kind of dealing which is closest to us … is not bare perceptual cognition, but rather that kind of concern which manipulates things and puts them to use… Such entities are not thereby objects for knowing the 'world' theoretically, they are simply what gets used, what gets produced, and so forth. (Heidegger 1962:95)

Through such dealings, the apprehension is neither merely perceptual nor rational. Rather, such handling reveals its own kind of knowledge.

Two aspects become clear in this statement. Firstly, the radical potential of Heidegger's philosophy becomes apparent in his notion of concernful dealings. In setting forth what it means to be a particular sort of being that takes care of things in its dealings, Heidegger suggests that concernful dealings

extend beyond the purview of human beings. Secondly, Heidegger initiates a praxical dimension to the worlding of the world. *Dasein* does not come to know the world theoretically through contemplative knowledge in the first instance. It comes to know the world theoretically, only after it has come to understand it equipmentally. Thus, it is only through use that we gain access to the world. Heidegger makes this distinction between theoretical conception and praxical understanding clear when he argues that it is through active use, we establish original relations with things. He cites the example of the using a hammer to support his contention:

> The less we just stare at the thing called hammer, the more actively we use it, the more original our relation to it becomes and the more undisguisedly it is encountered as what it is, as a useful thing. The act of hammering itself discovers the specific "handiness" of the hammer…. No matter how keenly we just *look at* the "outward appearance" of things constituted in one way or another, we cannot discover handiness. When we just look at things "theoretically," we lack an understanding of handiness. But association which makes use of things is not blind, it has its own way of seeing which guides our operations and gives them their specific thingly quality. (Heidegger 1996:65)

The kind of being which equipment possesses comes to light in the context of handlability. I can look at pots of different coloured paints, a camera or a computer screen and take pleasure in contemplating them, but it is only in use that they begin to reveal their potential. I can lay out my brushes and set a fresh canvas before me, but until I actually begin to work with them in making a painting I can not understand their Being.

The two-way action or mutual reflection between practice and theory, in what has become termed praxis, becomes central to my rethinking of the relationship of theory and practice in creativity. Following this logic, I would argue that art can be seen to emerge in the involvement with materials, methods, tools and ideas of practice. It is not just the representation of an already formed idea. In this formulation a praxical engagement with tools, materials and ideas becomes primary over the assumed theoretical-cognitive engagement (Ihde 1979:117). In this matrix, engagement with tools or technology produces its own kind of sight. Heidegger terms the kind of sight, through which we come to know how to paint, to dance or to write, 'circumspection' (*Umsicht*). For Heidegger, it is through circumspection that the "new" emerges. In this way, adds Levinas, 'we gain access to the world in an original and an originary way' (Levinas 1996:19).

Beyond Instrumentalism

In his distinction between theoretical knowledge and use, Heidegger identifies that tools can be articulated as two different kinds of beings. He proposes that where the being of tool is discovered in handling, it is revealed in its readiness-to-hand (*Zuhandenheit*) (Heidegger 1996:67). This being, as ready-to-hand, contrasts with a second kind of being, that of simple presence. In commenting on Heidegger's distinction, Levinas notes that 'it is precisely because handling does not follow upon a representation that handlability is not a simple "presence"' (Levinas 1996:19). Heidegger notes that, in presence, entities appear as just there, as presence-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*).

In use, a tool's qualities emanate from its usability and manipulability in-order-to do something. The Being of the ready-to hand derives from its character as something *for* something. In this conception, equipment manifests itself in its readiness-to-hand in-order-to do something. According to this description, the ready-to-hand belongs to the realm of productivity, not that of contemplation. In other words, production has the structure of the assignment of something to something.

Whilst Levinas has shown us that Heidegger's tool analysis suggests that man's being in the world is not in the representationalist mode, Heidegger's understanding of equipment as readiness-to-hand in-order-to do something sounds suspiciously like the instrumental definition of technology of which Heidegger is so strongly critical, in 'The Question Concerning Technology'.

In the human-tool relationship, Heidegger's assignment of something to something could be seen to reduce the ready-to-hand to a means to an end for human use. At one level Heidegger encourages this interpretation with his comments that equipment is 'manipulable in the broadest sense and at our disposal' (Heidegger 1962:98). Moreover, the ready-to-hand anticipates the concept of standing-reserve, which is defined in terms of being available to some ends as destined by man. This can be seen in Heidegger's assessment of nature as a natural resource, where 'wood is a forest of timber, the mountain a quarry of rock; the river is water power [and] the wind is wind "in the sails"' (Heidegger 1962:100).

In the 'Question Concerning Technology', the ready-to-hand collapses into standing-reserve. In this reduction of the ready-to-hand, nature, objects and equipment are absorbed into the totality of the standing-reserve. For Ihde, a writer on the human-technology relationship, what is lost, 'is the "tool shop"

itself, and with it, the direct expressivity which characterises the ready-to-hand' (Ihde 1979:126). In this conception, nature, objects and equipment are all viewed as a potential field or source of energy that can be captured, stored and used by humans. In the particular mode of revealing that is an ordering (or enframing) humans see their destiny as the domination of nature through technology. According to this view then, the tools of technology—the materials, techniques and tools—are still seen as available for humans to use.

In the intervening period between *Being and Time* and writing 'The Question Concerning Technology,' Heidegger's assessment of modern humanity became increasingly pessimistic. In *Being and Time*, it is not Heidegger's intention to reduce equipment to its usability. Rather his interest is in how the kind of being that equipment is, reveals itself in its assignment of something for something. He is concerned with what is discovered in use; that is, what shows itself. In his example of a hammer hammering, Heidegger makes it clear that, in such dealings, we do not grasp them thematically. He proposes that:

> Where we put something to use our concern subordinates itself to the "in-order-to" which is constitutive for the equipment we are employing at the time; the less we just stare at the hammer-thing, and the more we seize hold of it and use it, the more primordial does our relationship to it become, and the more unveiledly is it encountered as that which it is-as equipment. The hammering itself uncovers the specific manipulability … of the hammer. (Heidegger 1962:98)

The peculiar quality that presents itself in *circumspection* is that when we are using a tool, we are no longer aware of its qualities as tool. We are so concerned with the working that we no longer know the tool in a theoretical sense. The tool as merely present-at-hand recedes or withdraws. It is only when a tool fails or is unusable that we once again become aware of it. It becomes unready-to-hand. Faced with the tool's unreadiness-to-hand, Heidegger argues, it becomes a mere thing that lies there. It is just there as present-at-hand. In its unreadiness-to-hand as being-just-present-at-hand, Heidegger contends we are helpless. In this helpless mode, he suggests that, we exhibit a deficient mode of concern (Heidegger 1962:103).

In everyday life, we tend to be come helpless and frustrated when faced with the unreadiness-to-hand. Contemporary art, in contrast, tends to capitalise on the possibilities produced by unreadiness-to-hand. Deleuze and Guattari gesture to this propensity in contemporary art through reference, to what they call, the art-machine. The art-machine is an assemblage of heterogeneous linkages

that involves both human and non-human elements in the productivity of art. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the art-machine takes the opportunities presented by the unready-to-hand, on a different line of flight. They use the term 'desiring-machine', to differentiate between the technical machine which is tied to the ready-to-hand, and the type of artistic machine that only works when it is not functioning properly. The work of art is a desiring-machine that often short-circuits social production and interferes with the reproductive function of technical machines. Thus the artist presents us with:

> Shattered, burned, broken-down objects converting them to the regime of desiring-machines; breaking down is part of the very functioning of desiring-machines; the artist presents paranoiac machines, miraculating machines, and celibate machines as so many technical machines, so as to cause desiring machines to undermine technical machines. (Deleuze and Guattari 1983:32)

They cite the charred violins of Arman, Cesar's compressed car bodies and Ravel's compositions as evidence that art thrives where things don't work properly. Rather than producing helplessness, in these cases, the unreadiness-to-hand produces possibility. Possibilities exist where art is self sufficient and has no function beyond its Being as art. It is the space of creative play, where objects and tools no longer exist in-order-to.

According to Heidegger's way of thinking, the taking and re-assembling of elements into installations, collages and found objects may not bring us any closer to understanding the Being of beings. In capitalising on the unready-to-hand, this modern art could be seen to adopt the very modes of the challenging setting-forth, that is characteristic of enframing. In unlocking, transforming and switching about, this mode of revealing is fundamentally distinct from the mode of *poiētic* revealing so esteemed by Heidegger. It is a mere tinkering and operates in the realm of the ontic or the everyday.

However, we should not dismiss Deleuze and Guattari's pre-occupation with possibility too quickly. Heidegger is also centrally concerned with being open to the possibilities that the existence throws up. In existing, as we have already seen, *Dasein* is already thrown into the midst of its possibilities. In being in the midst and not positioned before them, *Dasein* takes the opportunity to seize possibility its very possibility (Levinas 1996:24-25). Such is the dynamism of being-in-the-world.

So how might this openness to possibility enable us to figure a different relation to the unready-to-hand, whether it is in everyday life or in artistic practice? Levinas suggests that when a tool is damaged, it stands out against the system in which it exists. It is this standing out, that emphasises the totality of the system of referrals involved:

> In this momentary loss of handlability, the "referral, in view of which the tool exists" [*revoi à ce en vue de quoi l'ustensile est*], is achieved. It awakens, stands out, and comes to light. And we are turned in that manner towards the totality of the system of referrals—a totality always implicitly understood but not till then emphasized. Here is a series of referrals which can only be realised in an "in-view-of-which" which is no longer in view of some other thing but in view of itself. We recognize *Dasein* itself in this structure. (Levinas 1996:20)

To illustrate this state of affairs, I wish to cite the everyday example of my car breaking down. As I stand on the side of the road waiting for mechanical assistance, I become all too aware that, when it is working, my car enables me to negotiate the world; to get from home to work, to the shops, to visit friends and so forth. Without it, I am lost and helpless. In its broken state, the presence of the car brings recognition that it is the car's functioning (handlability) that is central to my ability to negotiate the world. Levinas notes that, through this momentary loss of handlability, we come to understand that handlability is not a property of the tool, but is its mode of Being (Levinas 1996:22).

In Heidegger's praxical formulation, entities are not grasped thematically, but only in use. It is through "dealings"—for example through the hammering of the hammer—that the hammer cuts its own measure. In these dealings, the hammer itself uncovers its own specific manipulability. Thus for Heidegger:

> The hammering does not simply have knowledge about the hammer…. The hammer's character is equipment, but it has appropriated this equipment in a way which could not possibly be more suitable. (Heidegger 1962:98)

However, in his pre-occupation with the "in-order-to" quality of tools, Heidegger's understanding of praxis tends to focus on the means to an end, rather than engaging with what happens in the process itself. In an editor's footnote to 1962 edition of *Being and Time*, Macquarrie and Robinson note that when Heidegger talks about work [*Werk*], he tends to focus on the product achieved rather than the process of working (Heidegger 1962:99). Heidegger

confirms this when he says, 'that with which our everyday dealings proximally dwell is not the tools themselves. On the contrary, that with which we concern ourselves primarily is the work' (Heidegger 1962:120).

According to Heidegger, in our concernful dealings, we use and manipulate tools. Through this use, the kind of Being which equipment possesses manifests itself in its own right. He compounds this view when he comments that, 'only because equipment has this "being-in-itself" and does not merely occur, is it manipulable in the broadest sense and at our disposal' (Heidegger 1962:98).

Does this equipmental-being constitute the horizon of our encounters with tools and equipment? In the next Chapter I, will argue that it does not. However, in order to step out of our habitual ways of thinking about tools and equipment equipmentally, we have to take quite radical steps. In an alternative reading of the human relationship with the hammer, Felix Guattari begins to break down the view that the hammer is something at our disposal. He sets the art-machine in process when he implores us to, 'associate the hammer with the arm, the nail with the anvil' and let their "collective dance" 'bring to life the defunct guild of blacksmiths' (Guattari 1995:35-36).

Guattari invokes the dynamism of what we might call the unready-to-hand in taking the hammer on a different trajectory from that of Heidegger. He asks the "what if" question:

> What if we take a hammer apart by removing its handle? It's still a hammer is it not, albeit in a mutilated state? It is no longer ready-to-hand as a hammer hammering. Let us instead reduce the "head" of the hammer by fusion. (Guattari 1995:35)

Through this process, observes Guattari, the hammer will then 'cross a threshold of formal consistency where it will lose its form…. We are simply in the presence of metallic mass returned to smoothness, to the deterritorialization that precedes it appearance in machinic form' (Guattari 1995:35). In process, the metallic mass is no longer just a hammer, but is now open to a myriad of possibilities. The art-machine launches itself on such possibilities.

We have seen that it is through our continual encounters with possibility that the drama of existence is played out. The art-machine offers a unique opportunity to witness this play in its most distilled form. In living life, human be-ings tend to get caught up in the noise and clutter of the everyday. The art-machine, as a specialised machinic ensemble devoted to process, is

much more focussed on possibility in itself. The in-order-to function of tools is no longer the imperative that inflicts the desiring machine. In seizing possibility the art-machine has the possibility to transcend itself. This, as I will argue in the following Chapters, is the performativity of art.

In thinking through the place of possibility in the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari, I would like to draw some parallels with Heidegger's *Dasein*. As I have repeatedly shown, *Dasein* is always already thrown into the midst of possibility. Because *Dasein* understands existence as possibility, it has the potential to transcend itself and be its possibilities. Thus, when Levinas exclaims that '*Dasein* is always already beyond itself [*au dela de soi-meme*]' (Levinas 1996:24), he provides the grounds for us to understand that the mode of Being of *Dasein* necessarily involves seizing possibility in its very possibility. He continues:

> This way of being thrown forward towards one's own possibilities of adumbrating [*esquisser*] them throughout one's very existence, is a crucial moment of understanding. (Levinas 1996:24-25)

Levinas is emphatic that this way of being thrown forward towards one's own possibilities does not have the character of a plan established beforehand; that is, it is not of the representational kind. Rather, it is what Heidegger terms *Entwurf,* that is, 'project-in-draft' or 'projection'. This is a crucial moment of understanding in the Heideggerian sense. Here we must remember that "understanding" is not to be viewed as a cognitive faculty that is imposed on existence. It is not representational. Rather what is critical to Heidegger's notion of understanding is that understanding emerges through the care of handling. It is being-in-the-world. In this way, handling as care comes to supplant the instrumental version of in-order-to that threatens to derail Heidegger's account of tools.

In relocating our interest in handling as care, we can once again address the question of art practice. Seen this way, the paint, brushes and canvas are not the means to an end, the subject matter being painted is not merely present-at-hand, and nor is the artwork merely an end. Handling as care produces a crucial moment of understanding and that understanding is a revealing of possibility in its very possibility. This, not the completed artwork, *is* the work of art. In all of this, Deleuze and Guattari note, 'tools exist only in relation to the interminglings they make possible or that make them possible' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:90). Thus rather than focussing on the artwork, the emphasis shifts to the "precise state of interminglings".

Care and Contingency

The relationship of care and concernful dealings signals a different way of thinking the precise state of interminglings between humans and technology. In the modern world, ecological necessity has re-awakened a concern to establish a different relation to the technological. If humans continue to posit the world as standing reserve, the real danger is that we will not have a world at all. Heidegger's critique of technological thinking and his ability to rethink the relation to technology differently, offers us a way forward.

In the 'The Question Concerning Technology', Heidegger lays the foundations for such a mode of Being. In his reversal of the causal chain of means and ends, Heidegger reformulates the human-technology relation and posits it as one of co-responsibility and indebtedness. In this section I will demonstrate how the precise interminglings that occur between objects, artist, materials and processes in artistic practice, can be seen to exemplify this particular relationship of care that Heidegger sees as critical to developing a different relation to technology.

For Heidegger, human be-ings need to 'lend a hand' to 'enable the coming to presence or presencing of technology' (Heidegger 1977a:37). This is not as easy as it seems. As we have seen, humans have some obstacles to overcome, not least of which is the reductionism of an enframing revealing. In this age of technological calculating representation, the world is ordered, regulated and secured for human use. Thus before humans are able to lend a hand to the coming to presence of technology, Heidegger suggests that they must assume a role proper to their essence. He suggests that through consciousness, humans have a responsibility to become guardians of Being. In this role, Heidegger expects humans to co-operate with technology to supplant the mastery of representation. In the spirit of co-operation, he says, 'man's essence must … open itself to the essence of technology' (Heidegger 1977a:39). He suggests that, in place of an instrumental understanding of technology, we think our relation to technology in terms of care (*sorge*).

In order to effect the shift from instrumentality to care, Heidegger looks to creative practice and cites the example of the making of a silver chalice. Instead of discussing this production in terms of mastery and attribution, Heidegger establishes that the artistic process is one of responsibility and indebtedness. Further, he claims that the artist is not alone in causing art to come about. In his estimation, a number of contributing elements, or conjunctions are attributed with responsibility. In the example of the making of the silver chalice,

Heidegger identifies the other responsible elements involved in the process as matter, aspect and circumscribing bounds (Heidegger 1977a:6). Together with the artist, these ways of being responsible do not make an artwork, since art, like technology, is not concerned with making. Rather, they enable or bring-forth something into appearance. Heidegger believes it is through this bringing-forth, that this occasioning enables 'the growing things of nature as well as whatever is completed through the crafts and the arts [to] come at any given time to their appearance' (Heidegger 1977a:11).

Heidegger derives his understanding of bringing-forth or occasioning from Aristotle's doctrine of the four causes. Although an instrumental interpretation of the four causes involves a reduction of means to an end, Heidegger's interpretation produces a quite different dynamic: one that shifts the terms from mastery to care and indebtedness. In order to achieve this move, Heidegger first sets out the terms of Aristotle's doctrine of causality clearly and precisely. Secondly, he reverses the chain of causality arguing that indebtedness, rather than causality allows us to rethink our relation to technology.

In Aristotle's doctrine of causality, the first cause is identified as *causa materialis*. This is the matter or material out of which something is made. In Heidegger's example of the making of a silver chalice, the *causa materialis* is silver. The second cause, *causa formalis*, relates to the form that the thing takes or the shape into which the material enters. The forming of a chalice can be contrasted with the forming of a book, or a wheel-thrown pot can be contrasted with a hand built pot. Thus, for example, a thrown pot will take quite a different form from a hand built pot because of the centrifugal force of the pottery wheel. The third cause is the *causa finalis*. The *causa finalis* is the end or the purpose for which the thing was made. This end determines the form of the thing and thus its relation to *causa formalis* becomes immediately obvious. Thus the sacrificial rite for which the silver chalice was required determined, to some extent, its form and matter. The fourth cause is the *causa efficiens*. The *causa efficiens* is that which brings about the finished object. In the conception of the four causes, it is the silversmith who brings about this effect (Heidegger 1977a:6).

In the theory of means and ends which has dominated our understanding of technology (including the making of art), we have focused on the cause that brings something about, the cause that gets results. It is for this reason that Heidegger suggests that it is the *causa efficiens* that 'sets the standard for all causality' (Heidegger 1977a:7).[7] According to this accepted view, the artist and craftsperson is the one who obtains results and consequently the one who is

assigned authorship and ownership for the work. In harnessing means to ends, the artist justifiably can sign her/his name as the one who has made or caused a work to come into being.

However, this explanation does not satisfy Heidegger. In a move that effectively reverses the chain of causality, Heidegger introduces the notions of indebtedness and responsibility. His argument unfolds as follows:

> Silver is that out of which the silver chalice is made. As this matter (*hyle*), it is co-responsible for the chalice. The chalice is indebted to, that is, owes thanks to, the silver out of which it consists. But the sacrificial vessel is indebted not only to the silver. As a chalice, that which is indebted to the silver appears in the aspect of a chalice and not in that of a brooch or a ring. Thus the sacrificial vessel is at the same time indebted to the aspect (*eidos*) or idea of chaliceness. Both the silver into which the aspect is admitted as chalice and the aspect in which the silver appears are in their respective ways co-responsible for the sacrificial vessel…. But there remains yet a third that is above all responsible for the sacrificial vessel. It is that which in advance confines the chalice within the realm of consecration and bestowal… Finally there is a fourth participant in the responsibility for the finished sacrificial vessel's lying before us ready for use, i.e., the silversmith. (Heidegger 1977a:7-8)

Heidegger's move derives from his questioning of the essence of causality. He argues that the essence of causality is not, as modern thought would have it, a simple case of cause and effect. He suggests that, thought as the Greeks thought it, causality is 'the letting of what is not yet present arrive into presencing' (Heidegger 1977a:10). Through a careful unpacking of the etymology of the term *causa*, Heidegger traces it back to the Roman and then the Greek. Whilst *causa* was the Roman designation for cause, the Greeks used the term *aiton*. In Greek thinking, *aiton* carries with it a different sense. Here, according to Heiddegger, *aiton* means 'that to which something else was indebted' (Heidegger 1977a:7). From this analysis he concludes that the doctrine of four causes can be rearticulated and the trajectory of means and ends reversed. In this refiguration the four causes 'are the ways, all belonging at once to each other, of being responsible for something else' (Heidegger 1977:7).

This thinking unhinges our customary ways of conceiving the artistic relationship. The artist's responsibility neither derives from her/his role as *causa efficiens*, nor because in working s/he brings about the finished object. Heidegger contends that the silversmith is co-responsible for bringing the

silver chalice forth into appearance (Heidegger 1977a:8). Heidegger teases out a different relation between the silversmith, the silver and the chalice. As matter is co-responsible for the chalice, so the chalice is indebted to the silver (Heidegger 1977a:7). In his thinking, the other ways of being responsible are also indebted to the efforts of the 'silversmith for the "that" and the "how" of their coming into appearance and into play' (Heidegger 1977a:8). In a similar way, the silversmith is indebted to matter, aspect and circumscribing bounds for this bringing into appearance.

Where we have come to accept the view that humans use materials and methods to achieve an artistic end, Heidegger makes the claim that the four ways of being responsible (rather than the four causes) let something come to lie ready before us. In his example, the silver chalice comes to 'lie ready before us as a sacrificial vessel' (Heidegger 1977a:9). In bringing something into appearance the four ways of being responsible set something on its way:

> They set it free to the place and so start it on its way into its complete arrival. The principal characteristic of being responsible is this starting something on its way into arrival. It is in the sense of starting something on its way into arrival that being responsible is an occasioning or inducing to go forward. (Heidegger 1977a:9)

In his discussion of indebtedness and responsibility and later in his elaboration of *technē* as *poiēsis*, Heidegger suggests a different relationship or engagement than that of instrumentality. Here I want to recall Lovitt's observation that it is 'in *technē*, through art and handcraft that humans can participate in conjunctions with other contributing elements in the bringing forth of a thing into being' (Lovitt in Heidegger 1977a:xxiv). In this statement and also in Heidegger's use of the term concernful dealings with the environment, there is the suggestion that the relationship between humans and the ready-to-hand is not necessarily one of mastery. It involves an ethics other than the ethics of mastery.

In his attribution of responsibility and indebtedness to the silver and to the chalice, Heidegger grants agency to both the silver and the chalice. In doing so, he opens the possibility for theorising a very different relation between humans, materials and tools. However, as we saw in the first Chapter, it is not consciousness that forms the basis of our understanding. Rather consciousness proceeds from understanding and this understanding is predicated upon our dealings in the world. Thus for example, in the first instance, we do not know painting theoretically. We come to know how to paint through our dealings with paint, brushes, canvas and with a motif.

These concernful dealings in practice, allow us to understand Heidegger's critique of mastery. Mastery over, operates in the realm of representationalism. Skill with, on the other hand, operates according to a different logic, that is, the logic of practice. It may be seen to reside in the realm of concernful dealings. Thus skill implies an ethical relation of care and responsibility, not a relation of means and ends.

Heidegger's discussion of responsibility and indebtedness provide us with quite a different way to think about artistic practice. Thought this way, humans no longer set the world before them. Nor are they pre-occupied with ordering and switching around the world for their use. Indebtedness and responsibility usher in different way of relating in the world. They activate a mode of being that lets something come into appearance (Heidegger 1977a:9). In the place of an enframing mode of Being, this mode of Being of beings involves establishing conjunctions with other contributing elements in-the-world.

Material-Semiotic Actors

Whilst Heidegger can be interpreted as granting agency to the silver and the chalice in this complex ensemble of practice, he does not seem to be aware of the radical nature of such an assertion. This omission may be partially historical. When Heidegger was writing this essay between 1949 and 1954, the possibility of attributing agency to objects was, at least in the West, largely unthought. It was impossible for him to think outside of this frame.

A more recent pre-occupation with the agency of objects has enabled us to think radically outside the paradigm that set humans as the standard for all causality. Some contemporary thinkers, for example, Bruno Latour and Donna Haraway assert that objects are actors with agency. This assertion enables us to revisit the relationship between the silver, equipment and the artisan, and recast this relationship somewhat differently. In place of the logic of revelation or discovery, posited by Heidegger, Haraway introduces the 'power-charged social relation of "conversation"' (Haraway 1991:198). She contends that:

> The world neither speaks itself nor disappears in favour of a master decoder. The codes of the world are not still, waiting only to be read. The world is not raw material [standing-reserve?] for humanization. (Haraway 1991:198)

For Haraway, acknowledging the agency of the world is central for revisioning the world and refiguring a different politics of practice. Here the world is no

longer conceived representationally as an object for *subiectum*, nor is it a resource for use by humans as a means to an end. The world becomes an actor in the drama of existence.

How do we figure the dynamic conversation where the world and its objects are actors too? The central term in Haraway's elaboration is the material-semiotic actor. This actor may be human or non-human, machine or non-machine.[8] What is critical to her position is that the material-semiotic actor actively contributes to the production. Thus an object of knowledge is no longer a resource, ground, matrix, object, material or instrument to be used by humans as a means to an end. Rather an object of knowledge is an 'active, meaning-generating axis of the apparatus of bodily production' (Haraway 1991:200). It operates quite differently to the immutable mobiles upon which much of our knowledge is grounded.

Haraway's notion of the material-semiotic actor grew out of her engagement with writer Katie King's "apparatus of literary production". In King's schema, the apparatus of literary production is the matrix that spawns literature. Literature emerges at the intersection of art, business and technology (Haraway 1991:200). In this ensemble, language is as much an actor as is the author. As Haraway sees it:

> King's objects called "poems"… are sites of literary production where language also is an actor independent of intentions and authors, bodies as objects of knowledge are material-semiotic generative nodes. Their boundaries materialize in social interaction. (Haraway 1991:200-201).

In this way, Haraway attends to the relations and forces that take place within the very process or tissue of making. As she makes clear, these are some of the 'lively languages that actively intertwine in the production of literary value' (Haraway 1991:210). Language is set in process.

In her elaboration of material-semiotic actors, Haraway foregrounds the question of artistic or authorial intentionality. Her assertion, that in literary production, language is an actor independent of intentions and authors, supports Foucault's argument presented in 'What is an Author?' (1984). In her particular refiguration, conscious thought and intentions may play a part but they are, as Brian Massumi shows us, 'one line of causality among the many proliferations' (Massumi 1992:28). Taking this back to Heidegger's rethinking of causality, we can see that the artist or craftsperson is co-responsible for what emerges as art.

The dialogical and emergent nature of literary production also resonates with Edward Sampson's (1999) notion of the 'acting ensemble'. For him, the acting ensemble presents a dialogical construct that takes into account the emergent quality of creative practice. He would argue that creativity, like intelligence, is the property of the acting ensemble, not the individual. The acting ensemble takes in the totality of the acting environment. In Sampson's thinking, we are 'woven together with context'. He speaks of 'embodied interactive emergence', arguing that the acting ensemble is characterised by its emergent property. This removes the focus from the acting individual and places it in the relations between actors. In this shift from the individual artist to the relations between the individual body, the social body and the material conditions of making (say a painting), the actors can include paint, the canvas, type of support, the weather, the wind and gravity as well as discursive knowledges.[9]

In the act or event of painting, sensory and other bodily responses are fully focussed on the demands of the unpredictable and uncontrollable materiality of paint interacting with the environment. Theorist Estelle Barrett, notes that 'stimuli arise in the heat of the moment to which the creative gesture becomes a reaction that is released from conceptual ways of thinking' (Barrett 2002:114). In this experience, painting may be seen as a response to what happens in the interaction between paint, oil, turps, canvas, gravity, sun, heat, the occasional live beast and the human body. In this process, the body, the materiality of the paint and the environment are implicated and mutually dependent, so that art emerges in the interactive labour of making. This dynamic relation figures material practice in terms of co-emergence rather than mastery. It is the play of the matter of bodies, the materials of production and matters of discourse in sign work. As I will demonstrate in Chapter Five, in a co-emergent practice matter is not impressed upon. Here, matter is in process as a dynamic interplay through which meaning and effects emerge. This is the logic of practice.

Linkages and Assemblages

In Haraway's theorisation of the material-semiotic actor—with its emphasis on language as an actor independent of intentions and bodies as material-semiotic generative nodes—there can be found strong correspondences with Deleuze and Guattari's (1983) notion of machinic assemblages. Their elaboration of machinic assemblages presents a challenge to those theoretical paradigms that assume the centrality of the knowing subject.

In evoking the terms "machine", "machinic assemblages" and "desiring machines", Deleuze and Guattari appear to evoke the technological. However,

their concern is not the technological *per se*. In Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of the machine and the machinic, we are asked to forget our commonsense understanding of what a machine *is*. As the essence of technology is nothing technological for Heidegger, so the machine, in Deleuze and Guattari, is neither machinery nor equipment. In order to make this clear, they differentiate between the mechanical and the machinic. The mechanical, as exemplified in the form of technological apparatus, is characterised by a structural interrelationship between the discrete parts working together to perform work. This echoes Heidegger's ontic realm of technological activity, replete with its assembly of rods, pistons and chassis. But just as this assembly in no way comprises enframing itself nor brings it about, so Deleuze and Guattari's 'mechanical' must not be confused with the very different logic of the machinic.

The differentiation brings us back to the distinction between molar and molecular that was introduced in the first Chapter. As Deleuze and Guattari emphasize:

> The 'real difference is … between on the one hand the molar machine—whether social, technical, or organic—and on the other the desiring machine, which is of a molecular order. Desiring-machines are the following: formative machines, whose very misfirings are functional, and whose functioning is indiscernible from their formation: chronogeneous machines engaged in their own assembly (*montage*). (Deleuze and Guattari 1983:286)

In their pragmatics, the machine and the machinic are defined in terms of what they do. What they are *is* what they do. In conceptualising the machinic, their concern is with production and the interminglings that constitute this process of production. Put simply, a machine is an *agencement* or an arrangement of forces. In contrast with Heidegger's conception of production as the assignment of something ready-to-hand in-order-to do something, Deleuze and Guattari focus on the production of production itself. In this praxiological ontology, machines are not instrumental, not just a means to an end, but, as Grosz notes, are 'the conditions as well as the effect of any making, any producing' (Grosz 1994:168). Everything is production, a production of production. Humans and nature are one and the same thing as producer-product. Production is seen as the essential reality of humans and nature. In this matrix, the rules governing the relationship are always those of connectivity, not of mastery. One machine is always coupled with another. This coupling, they term 'a machinic assemblage'.

The category "assemblage" has an important place in the vocabulary and practice of contemporary visual art practice. It is used to describe art, usually sculpture, which uses pre-existing and found objects in the work. Jean Tingueley and Robert Rauschenberg are often cited as practitioners of the "art of assemblage". Assemblage and its two dimensional counterparts collage and montage bring together disparate elements and materials into conjunction, in the production of a new work of art. But the critical question remains. How can the practice of assemblage help us to understand Deleuze and Guattari's conception of assemblage?

Elizabeth Grosz sets out the terms which define the machinic assemblage:

> Assemblages are heterogeneous, disparate, discontinuous alignments or linkages that are bought together in conjunctions (x plus y plus z) or severed through disjunctions and breaks. (Grosz 1994:167)

As provisional linkages of elements, fragments and flows, art assemblages appear to meet the criteria set out by Grosz in her definition of the machinic assemblage. Bits of junk, materials bought from shops, domestic ware, traditional artists' materials and bits and pieces from magazines, photographs, photocopies and newspapers are brought together by the artist to create an assemblage. Robert Rauschenberg's *Canyon* (1959), for example, combines oil on canvas, wood, printed matter, a stuffed eagle and a pillow tied to the canvas with a cord. Here, the bringing together of heterogeneous, disparate and discontinuous alignments to form physical conjunctions, initially unsettle preconceptions about the nature of art thus creating intellectual disjunctions.

More profound perhaps is the work of Jean Tinguely. Tinguely is best known for his "explosive" sculptural assemblages. For example, in his *Homage to New York: A Self-constructing, Self-destructing Work of Art* (1960), Jean Tinguely made an assemblage that both created conjunctions and severed them through disjunctions and breaks. Not only did the work not do what machines are usually supposed to do, but it also created a "happening" and destroyed itself in the process. In reflecting on the work, Tinguely commented, 'I try to distil the frenzy of our joyful, industrial confusion' (Tinguely quoted in Lucie-Smith 1987:77).

Modern art may have a privileged place in the lexicon of Deleuze and Guattari, but do the modes of practice affirmed in assemblage, montage and collage, encapsulate the breadth that is envisaged in their elaboration of the machinic assemblage? Does Tingueley's *Homage to New York: A Self-constructing, Self-*

destructing Work of Art, perform as a "machinic assemblage" in the sense in which Deleuze and Guattari conceive it? Further, does such work enable the mode of *poiētic* revealing that is given privileged status in Heidegger's thinking?

At one level it could be argued that in these particular assemblages, we see a type of revealing that is an enframing. According to such an assessment, items from the standing reserve are 'transformed, stored, distributed and switched about' (Heidegger 1977a:16) in order to make assemblages. Thus a challenging revealing characterised by orderability and substitutability could be seen to characterise the art assemblage. From this position, does the art of assemblage just make more standing reserve? If this is so, then in their role as the orderer of standing reserve, artists remain within a representationalist relation with the world.

On the other hand the art of assemblage can be seen to do more than just add to standing reserve. In their capacity to create connections and couplings in a free relation that starts something on its way, assemblages enable a *poiētic* rather enframing revealing. Where the danger lurks, for assemblage, as with all other artworks, is when it lies in the stock rooms of art galleries and auction houses. As standing reserve, it gets caught up in creating a determined relation of ordering and regulating.

In Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the machinic assemblage there is no hierarchical or central order or organisation. In such an assemblage, the provisional linkage of elements, fragments and flows, includes ideas, things—human and non-human, animate and inanimate—and these exist on the same plane. They all have the same praxiological status:

> An assemblage has neither base nor superstructure, neither deep structure nor superficial structure; it flattens all of its dimensions onto a single plane of consistency upon which reciprocal presuppositions and mutual insertions play themselves out. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:90)

As Elizabeth Grosz makes clear, there is no hierarchy of Being, no preordained order to the collection and no central organisation or plan to which elements must conform. Rather their law is 'the imperative of endless experimentation, metamorphosis, or transmutation, alignment and re-alignment' (Grosz 1994:167). She suggests that:

> Assemblages are the consequence of a practice, whether it be that of a bee in relation to the flower and the hive or a subject making something using tools or implements. (Grosz 1994:167-8)

In this definition, Grosz comes close to articulating a conception of the assemblage that resonates with Heidegger's understanding of *Dasein* where, in the midst of possibility, beings continually seize possibility in all its possibilities. Tinguely also came some way towards understanding this imperative when he entitled his assemblage *Homage to New York: A Self-constructing, Self-destructing Work of Art*. In this title, he iterates a recognition (often stated by artists) that, in the making of a work, there is a point at which the work takes over and the artist is no longer in control.

In *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-aesthetic Paradigm* (1995), Guattari addresses the conundrum brought about by the shift that is enabled in an assemblage. In the machinic-technical world that structures our lives:

> If there's choice and freedom at certain "superior" anthropological stages, it is because we will also find them at the most elementary strata of machine concatenations. But the notions of elements and complexity are susceptible to being brutally inverted. Those that are the most differentiated and undifferentiated co-exist within the same chaos which, at infinite speed, plays its virtual registers—one against the other and one with the other. (Guattari 1995:53)

Through its movements, speeds and actions, the assemblage brutally inverts the strata, bifurcates and engenders new fields of the possible. In the assemblage, it is not just about changing the meanings we make, but more radically, the concern is with changing the way we make meanings.[10] With its emphasis on movement, speeds and action, I am again reminded of Haraway's 'power-charged social relation of "conversation"' (Haraway 1991:198). In this sense, Deleuze and Guattari and Haraway all attend to the relations and forces that take place within the very process or tissue of making. They contest the objectification of representationalism and its propensity to set an object before a human subject.

Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of the machinic assemblage and assemblages of enunciation begins to allow us to think differently about artistic practice. It no longer privileges *a* human body or *a* single consciousness. Rather, as Olkowski has pointed out, what is produced is a 'multiplicity of connections involving the body' (Olkowski 1999:44). In this conception, the

body she speaks of should not be confused with the singular bounded body of a unitary human being. Rather, the body is seen in broad terms, 'not as a bounded 'oneness', not as a "medium" … *body* does not designate substance … rather *body* is a term that expresses the relationship between forces (Olkowski 1999:44).

For Deleuze and Guattari, as Olkowski observes, the body is conceptualised in terms of 'speeds and intensities, productive flows of forces seeking to escape the authority of unity, organization, and hierarchy' (Olkowski 1999:44). In this designation, it is possible to conceive of artistic practice as a productive flow of different forces, different speeds and intensities operating to create a machinic assemblage.

In the thinking of Deleuze and Guattari, human consciousness is just one element in the complex interplay of practice and no longer a privileged one at that. In their conception, practice doesn't reveal, but rather realises movement. Deleuze and Guattari's realisation of movement includes the conditions as well as the effects of making (Grosz 1994:168). This movement, says Brian Massumi is a consequence of the encounter of different speeds, intensities and forces (Massumi 1992:15). In this encounter, the human is no longer outside of the assemblage directing the proceedings. The human being becomes just one material-semiotic actor engaged in complex conversation with other players.

In this assemblage of different forces, speeds and intensities, it is not just humans who possess these qualities. Tools and materials also display them. They are not passive to the different speeds and intensities of different humans.[11] In the human-computer-internet assemblage or the human-computer-software assemblage, we are constantly aware of the operation of these different speeds and intensities. On a clear day on the internet, the connections are almost instantaneous and information is received and sent speedily on its way. An older slower software package (or modem, or live connection) will often be dispensed with because of its limitations and will be replaced by a speedier version.

But what of the subtler example of the wood-tool encounter? In talking of the relation between the woodworker, the wood and the plane, Massumi makes the point that the signs in the wood are not passive, even if their action is slower and their force less active than the tool or the human. In looking at the wood-tool encounter, we can come closer to an understanding of the dynamism of material practice. Massumi contends that the encounter between the wood, the tool and the human in woodworking is a 'hand-to-hand combat of energies' (Massumi 1992:14). It does not produce form as we normally think it, nor is it static:

> It is a dynamism, composed of a number of interacting vectors. The kind of "unity" it has in no way vitiates that multiplicity—it is precisely an interaction between a multiplicity of terms, an interrelation of relations, an integration of disparate elements. It is a diagram of a process of becoming. (Massumi 1992:14)

In this dynamism, diagramming cannot be known in advance nor can it be mapped and translated into a different situation as a prototype. Such a process does not produce immutable mobiles. Although we may have some awareness of the potential of a tool or a piece of wood—for example, through previous dealings with wood and tools—every new situation brings about a different constellation of forces and speeds. The wood may be a bit harder, the tool sharper or blunter and our own energies more or less focussed. Thus our relation to technical things is inevitably characterised by a play between the understandings that we bring to the situation and the contingency of the situation itself. This relation is not a relation of mastery. In the heat of practice, I would like to suggest, that the relation to the technological is awesome. It is a sublime encounter.

Francis Bacon's observation concerning his attempts to "deal" with paint, support this contention:

> Paint is so malleable that you never do really know. It's such an extraordinary supple medium that you never do quite know what paint will do. I mean, you even don't know that when you put it on wilfully, as it were, with a brush—you never quite know how it will go on. (Bacon in Sylvester 1980:96)

He continues:

> In one's conscious activity in painting—at any rate in oil painting, which is such a fluid and curious medium—often the tension will be completely changed by just the way a stroke of the brush goes on. It breeds another form that the form you're making can take. (Bacon in Sylvester 1980:97)

Creative practice can be conceived of as a performance in which linkages are constantly being made and remade. As one of the actors, the artist becomes a force or intensity involved in the action. The other actors similarly become forces and intensities. Whilst each has the same praxiological status, each has its own

character and contribution to make. Thus creative practice is a co-emergent practice. When David Sylvester observes, that at the end of Bacon's paintings there is 'the residue of the activity', he betrays his representationalism (Sylvester 1980:89). He forecloses process and conceives the artwork as product.

For Heidegger, as we will see in the following Chapter, there is much more than merely the residue of the activity. According to his thinking, it is the responsibility of the contributing elements to start something on its way into arrival (Heidegger 1977a:9). As such, the responsibility of contributing elements is as a freeing claim. On this, he is emphatic:

> Freedom governs the open in the sense of the cleared and lighted up…. Freedom is that which conceals in a way that opens to light, in whose clearing here shimmers that veil that covers what comes to presence of all truth and lets the veil appear as that what veils. Freedom is the realm of destining that at any given time starts a revealing on its way. (Heidegger 1977a:25)

The Challenge of Contemporary Practice

I would like to argue that artists in the modern age are so focussed on creating and marketing artwork that they forget they are co-responsible (along with other contributors) for letting art come forth into being. In their pre-occupation with being be-ings, some artists become engaged in art business and tend to reduce their materials and tools to a means to an end. In the world of art business it is so easy to become caught up in an enframing mode of revealing. In contemporary society, as we have seen, an enframing revealing threatens to foreclose all other modes of revealing. As I will argue in the following Chapter, where enframing dominates, art gets lost in art business.

I believe Heidegger is quite right when he makes the assessment that in contemporary society humans live under an illusion:

> Man exalts himself to the posture of lord of the earth. In this way the impression comes to prevail that everything man encounters exists only insofar as it is his construct. This illusion gives rise in turn to one final delusion: It seems as though man everywhere and always only encounters himself…. In truth, however, precisely nowhere does man today any longer encounter himself, i.e., his essence. Man stands so decisively in attendance on the challenging-forth of enframing that he does not apprehend enframing as a claim, that he fails to see himself as the one

> spoken to, and hence also fails in every way to hear in what respect he eksists, from out of his essence, in the realm of an exhortation or address, and thus *can never* encounter only himself. (Heidegger 1977a:27)

In this assessment, Heidegger poses a most timely challenge to those artists and theorists who subscribe to theories that propose that art is a social construction or that there can never be anything outside of representation. In presenting Heidegger's questioning concerning technology, and drawing out its implications for rethinking the question of art, the task of this Chapter has been to demonstrate two things. Firstly, a particular mode of art in the modern age has become imbricated in the ordering challenging forth of enframing. Secondly, whilst this mode of revealing has the propensity to drive out every other possibility of revealing, including a *poiētic* revealing, this fate is not inevitable. In presenting Heidegger's elaboration of equipmentality and his reworking of Aristotle's doctrine of the four causes, I have prepared the way to think again what constitutes the work of art. This question forms the basis of the following Chapters.

3

THE "WORK" OF ART

> Art is the origin of the artwork and of the artist. (Heidegger 1977b:182)

> The origin of the work of art—that is, the origin of both the creators and the preservers, which is to say of a people's historical existence—is art. This is so because art is in its essence an origin: a distinctive way in which truth comes into being, that is, becomes historical. (Heidegger 1977b:202)

I concluded the previous Chapter by arguing that contemporary art practice has become implicated in an enframing mode of revealing. Yet Heidegger has argued that art is, in its essence, a revealing or bringing into being of "truth". Two critical questions emerge from these seemingly contradictory assessments. Firstly, what "truth" is set to work in a technocratic era. Secondly, is it possible to make art, in the Heideggerian sense, in the contemporary world? In addressing these questions, I wish to turn to Heidegger's critical essay on art, 'The Origin of the Work of Art' (1935). In the epilogue to this essay, Heidegger makes the provocative statement that, perhaps lived experience is the element in which art dies (Heidegger 1977b:204). This statement requires clarification. How can lived experience be the element in which art dies, when Heidegger also claims that the work of art emerges through lived, embodied experience? He affirms this when he says that lived experience is 'the source that is standard not only for art appreciation and enjoyment but also for artistic creation' (Heidegger 1977b:204).

The conundrum that Heidegger's two statements present, revolves around the distinction that he draws between "Art" and "art", or as he puts it between the essence of art and "art business". For Heidegger, the essence of art or Art, operates in the realm of Being. On the other hand, art business is what happens in the midst of beings as human beings try to negotiate the business of making, exhibiting, viewing, buying and selling artwork in a modern techno-

cratic society. This distinction needs at the outset to be put in the context of Heidegger's central metaphysical question. How in the midst of beings, that is in the midst of culturally mediated lived experience, is Being realised?

In this questioning Heidegger returns to what he posits as the fundamental distinction between the Being of beings (*das Sein des Seienden*) and be-ing (*das Seiende*). For Heidegger, Being is always concerned with the Being of beings as such, not with human be-ings *per se*. This distinction is what Heidegger terms the ontological difference. In his thinking, ontology is concerned with Being as such, whereas the ontic is concerned with the lived, culturally mediated experience of human beings. This creates the parameters for his discussion of Art and art business. Whilst Art or the essence of art is concerned with the ontological, the life of an individual artist, the art practice of an artist, and the artwork, all operate in the ontic realm of be-ings. The ontic is the realm of art business and much else as well. Within this context, the central task in this Chapter will be to investigate whether the essence of art can be realised in the midst of art business. As I will demonstrate, Heidegger's concern that we transcend the mere ontic and pose the ontological question of Being, creates an unresolved tension. If the question of the essence of art is to be addressed, how do we deal with the question of life experience, the experience of art appreciation and artistic creation?

The "Truth" in Art

Heidegger worries that in our pre-occupation with art business, Art in itself may no longer be the essential and necessary way in which truth happens in our historical age (Heidegger 1977b:205). Where art business rules supreme, the truth of art is forgotten. This concern raises two further questions: What is the truth of art? What is its essence?

In Chapter Two, we came to understand that, for Heidegger, the essence of technology did not lie in making, manipulating or manufacturing. In 'The Origin of The Work of Art', Heidegger affirms that this is also true for the essence of art. Just as the essence of technology is not concerned with making and manipulating, so neither is the essence of art concerned with making, manipulating or manufacturing artworks. The "work" that art *does*, is categorically not the object—painting, sculpture, drawing, print and so on—that we have come to call an artwork. This evaluation also holds for musical and poetical works.

So what is art's essence? At the outset I must clarify that Heidegger's use of the terms "essence" and "truth" is not essentialist. There is no single essence

and no single truth that he is trying to pinpoint and fix. In Heidegger's thinking, art in its essence is a mode of creating an open region in which truth (*alētheia*) or instances of truth emerge. As he notes, 'Art is the setting-into-work of truth…. Art lets truth originate' (Heidegger 1977b:202). In this delineation of the task of art, we are reminded of the central thesis of 'The Question Concerning Technology'. The essence of technology, states Heidegger, is to be found in its character as a mode of revealing. 'Technology comes to presence [*West*] in the realm where revealing and unconcealment take place, where *alētheia*, truth, happens' (Heidegger 1977a:13).

In some very significant ways, the questions raised in the 'The Question Concerning Technology' relate to the central concerns underpinning 'The Origin of the Work of Art'. In particular, Heidegger's criticism of enframing as the distinctive mode of revealing operating in the modern technological age, mirrors his critique of art business. Just as enframing is characterised by a challenging setting-forth and ordering of the world as standing reserve, so the business of art is similarly concerned. In fact, art business as a mode of revealing is an enframing. Heidegger makes it clear that as enframing, art business takes us away from the essence of art or Art:

> As soon as the thrust into the awesome is parried and captured by the sphere of familiarity and connoisseurship, the art business has begun. Even a painstaking transmission of works to posterity, all scientific efforts to regain them, no longer reach the work's own being, but only a remembrance of it. (Heidegger 1977b:193)

In this mode, art is a resource at the disposal of man. What is lost in the reduction of art to standing reserve, is a mode of revealing that enables truth to be set-to-work.

The sort of thinking that typifies art business is part of what McHoul terms "cultural thinking". He remarks that, for Heidegger, 'cultural thinking is a mistaken thinking that leads away from questioning of the first rank, that is, from questioning matters in their essence' (McHoul 2000a:24). The task of 'The Origin of the Work of Art' is to take us back to that central question: What is the essence of art or what Heidegger terms "Art"? In putting this question to the fore, Heidegger asks us to step back from the busy work of art business and re-assess the stakes involved in Art as revealing. In this re-orientation to questioning matters in their essence, it becomes clear why Heidegger worries that lived experience might be the element in which Art dies.

The concern—that while socially mediated lived experience provides the source for art appreciation, enjoyment and artistic creation it also endangers Art—forms the basis for my meditation on his essay. How, in the midst of art business, can the essence of art be realised? I want to extend Heidegger's question and ask: How, in the midst of all of the designing and communicating that is expected from the work of contemporary art, can the essence of art itself be realised?

The Work of Art

For Heidegger, the question concerning the origin of the work of art turns out to be a question about the essence of art. He asks an obvious, but too often neglected question. How are we to talk about the "work" of art if we do not know beforehand, what a work of art is? Heidegger finds that our common preconceptions about the character of the work of art conceal rather than reveal the "work" of art. For this reason, he believes we need to go the work of art and ask what and how it is. It is very difficult to set aside our preconceptions and "listen" to the work of art. To be able to hear what the work of art has to say, one has to be receptive to its particular voice. For Heidegger, receptiveness necessarily involves openness. The openness that is required to allow the work of art to speak is no less difficult for the viewer than it is for the artist. It is in the sense of preservation of art that Heidegger proposes we have an ethical responsibility to listen to art, since 'the work's own peculiar actuality … is only brought to bear where the work is preserved in the truth that happens through the work itself' (Heidegger 1977b:193). As we will see shortly, it is through "preservation" that instances of truth are revealed.

In order to start us on the way, Heidegger urges us to go to the actual work and ask it what and how it is. Our first task in this quest is to differentiate works of art from other things in the world. Heidegger suggests that works 'are as naturally present as are things' (Heidegger 1977b:145). Works have a "thingly" quality, as does a naturally-occurring thing like a stone or a clod of earth. If this is so and if the work of art is as naturally present as are these other things, what makes a work of art's "thingly" quality any different from that of a stone or a vacuum cleaner? What, for example, differentiates Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917) from any ordinary urinal to be found in a public toilet? And, if it is qualitatively different, how does this thingly quality feature in the work that the artist properly makes?

The urinal that Duchamp bought from the J.L. Mott's Ironworks was just an ordinary urinal, no different from any other found in French public toilets

of the period. However, in the act of signing it R. Mutt and attempting to exhibit it as an artwork in the 1916 Society of Independent Artists' Annual Exhibition in New York, Duchamp transformed it into a new being. In response to its rejection, Duchamp's artist friend Beatrice Wood defended the action and claimed its status as Art:

> Whether Mr Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view—created a new thought for that object. (Wood quoted in Godfrey 1998:30)

In Wood's estimation, the urinal's use value, or equipmental-being had disappeared and an opening had been created in which a new thought for that object could emerge. This is precisely the 'setting-into-work of truth' (Heidegger 1977b:202) that Heidegger sees as the essence of art.

On first impression it may appear that Duchamp's action was caught up in the connoisseurship of art business—negotiating the business of making, exhibiting, viewing and criticising. However, in questioning what Art was, his provocation unsettled preconceptions and produced movement in thought itself. In putting the basic concept of art in crisis, Duchamp provided the preconditions for setting, what has come to be known as, conceptual art on its way into arrival. For Heidegger this movement is the task of philosophical thinking. In this critical turn, art was bought much closer to philosophy and the artist or writer put in the position of the philosopher.[1]

However this discussion still does not address the thingly quality of the work of art. The thingly element provokes serious questioning in a contemporary context, where an artwork may not appear as naturally present in the same way as a vacuum cleaner or a stone. What is the status of a performance, a conceptual piece or a virtual immersive work? Is the thingly feature of a work of art concerned with the materiality or objecthood of the thing or does it have some other character? In the plastic arts, such as painting, sculpture and printmaking, it is hard to separate the thingly quality of a work of art from its appearance as a material object—but what of those conceptual and virtual artworks that do not take material form? Without material form, can conceptual and virtual art be said to possess a thingly character? What does the artist properly make, in what has been termed a post-medium culture?[2]

Heidegger did not anticipate such dilemmas when he wrote 'The Origin of the Work of Art', despite the crisis in representation that had been precipitated

by the advent of photography and other technological innovations, which had impacted on the art business. However, by recourse to Kant's "thing-in-itself", he does provide a way forward. Kant's thing-in-itself refers to the sort of thing that does not show itself. As Heidegger notes, in philosophy, both things-in themselves and things that appear are called things (Heidegger 1977b:147). Heidegger extends this understanding of the thing by returning to pre-Socratic understanding of "thingness". In this reckoning, a thing does not necessarily need a material form. In pre-Socratic understandings of thingness, "up" and "down" become things. In Heidegger's thinking, death and judgement are the last of such things. If, as Heidegger argues, God is just one of those things, it seems valid to argue that virtual images are also things.

So if a thing is not defined by its material form or by its appearance, what is it? For Heidegger, a thing is 'whatever is not simply nothing' (Heidegger 1977b:147). Thus a work of art, whether it is material or virtual can be considered a thing, just as a stone or a clod of earth is a thing. What use is this concept to us in thinking about the essence of art, or for my purposes, the work of art?

Heidegger begins his inquiry into the essence of art with the enigmatic statement that the work of art manifests 'something else over and above the thingly element', and it is this which constitutes its artistic nature (Heidegger 1977b:145). In the work of art, "this something other" is bought together with the thing that is made. What is this curious something other that a work of art manifests? Heidegger tells us that it is allegory. Allegory allows a work to make public something other than itself.

In western culture (and it is primarily western culture that Heidegger is dealing with) allegory has frequently been used to express generalisations about the existence of human beings.[3] An allegory is a story, image or object with two meanings: a literal meaning and a second coded or symbolic meaning, whereby it stands in for some abstract idea. The coded meaning is embedded in the work and the reader or viewer is given hooks in order that they can access this second level of meaning.

The operation of allegory, as this "something other", can be demonstrated in the contrast between a rock and a sculpture, for example, Massimiliano Soldani's bronze *Virtue Triumphant over Vice*. We look at the rock lying in front of us. The rock is just a rock.[4] In contrast, Soldani's sculpture of a female figure standing over a male figure is not to be taken so literally. As the title tells us, the woman in the sculpture is *not* just a woman. Rather, she stands in symbolically for something else. Her "standing over" signifies virtue's victory

over vice. Depending on the context in which it is presented, the sculpture immediately opens out onto a range of possible cultural readings. A feminist reading of Soldani's sculpture would reveal a very different understanding from that of a formal or an iconographic reading. Through all this cultural activity, a sculpture is different from a rock that just lies there. A sculpture is a coded text that must be deciphered to allow its richness of meanings to be released to the viewer.[5] In order to understand the allegory, one has to be inducted into the social codes upon which its meanings depend.

As a socially-agreed code, allegory allows social meanings to be transmitted through a work of art. Meaning is brought together in the work of art through allegory or the sharing of symbolic codes. From this point of view, we could argue quite conclusively that the origin of the work of art lies in its social constitution. The argument seems to be turning to the question of signs. It is through the operation of symbolic codes or signs that meaning inheres in the work of art. Without these shared codes, there would be no Art let alone works of art. The "thing" would be a thing that lies before us and nothing more.

Let us pause for a moment and consider the assertion that the origin of the work of art is social. It seems self-evident that the category of art is a social, not a "natural" category. Heiddeger's suggestion that we consider works of art in terms of how they are experienced and enjoyed by those who encounter them, can be seen to support the assertion that the essence of art lies in its socially constituted meaning. The origin of the work of art lies in socially ascribed meaning and meaning comes about through sign work or semiosis.[6] Is this what Heidegger is talking about when he inquires into the origin of the work of art and suggests that the "something other", that the work manifests, is allegory? Surely this suggestion would return us to the realm of the ontic, the realm that is central to art business.

Heidegger's position can be intuited from his critique of representational thinking. The preconception of art as a sign would colour every experience of beings. We would no longer see the thingly feature of the artwork. Rather, where art is conceived as a sign, beings get caught in the ontic, rather than being open to the Being of art or Art. Hence we need to go back to Heidegger's assertion that the "something other" of art is allegory and ask again just what he means by this assertion. What is this something other if it is not socially agreed upon meaning? His answer is cryptic:

> This one element in a work that manifests another, this one element that joins with another, is the thingly feature in the artwork. It seems

> almost as though the thingly element in the artwork is like the substructure into and upon which the other, proper element is built. And is it not this thingly feature in the work that the artist properly makes by his handcraft? (Heidegger 1977b:146)

Thus the something other of art is not an overlaid superstucture that fits onto the thing and gives it aesthetic value or meaning; rather it subsists within the structure itself. It is the work of art's purposiveness without purpose, whereby it intimates or strives towards something else. We tend to assume that this intimation is towards something useful, like meaning. However this is not the case. The work of art may in fact be totally useless. The work of art strives or stretches towards its own essence or its own truth. This purposiveness without purpose operates in a different order from the realm of signs.

Commonsense Assumptions about the Work of Art

A painting may hang on the wall next to a barometer or a calendar. A sculpture may sit in a crate in the back of a removalist's van alongside cupboards, beds, refrigerators, washing machines and vacuum cleaners. A print may wait at the framer's, side by side with family photos and certificates of merit. Heidegger claims that all works have a thingly character. The sculpture, the vacuum cleaner, the print, the calendar and the certificate are all things. Moreover, they have all been formed by human action. What then, differentiates the work of art from the certificate of merit or the barometer or the vacuum cleaner? Jeff Koons's placement of three vacuum cleaners one on top of the other, in perspex cases, in *New Schelton Wet/Dry TripleDecker* (1981) worries any neat distinction. What makes his vacuum cleaners different from my Hoover? How is it a work of art? How can we think about this problem?

In order to tease out this conundrum, Heidegger's first task is to test commonly held assumptions about the work of art as a thing. He identifies three commonly held assumptions or ways of thinking about the thingness of things that persist in Western thought. The first way of thinking about thingness consists of identifying a thing's traits or its characteristics. Secondly, thingness may be conceived of as the unity of a manifold of sensations. Finally, and most commonly, in thought about artwork, we conceive the thingness of the thing as formed matter (Heidegger 1977b:156). Thus, for example, a ceramic bowl is formed clay. His critique of these three modes of thinking thingness, proceeds in tenacious Heideggerian fashion. He

presents each approach as a self-evident truth and then cuts through this self deception to demonstrate the inability of such modes of thought to reveal the specificity of the thingness of the work of art.

We commonly identify a thing by its core characteristics. The core characteristics of the thing are those that are always and already there in the thing. As an example, Heidegger describes a block of granite in terms of its characteristics. A block of granite is characterised by its hardness, heaviness, extended bulkiness, shapelessness, roughness, colouredness and dull shininess (Heidegger 1977b:148). We see these as the characteristics of the block of granite. They belong to the granite. They are its properties. But this raises an obvious question. Do these properties reveal the granite*ness* of granite? For example, if we perform a chemical analysis of granite, do we know the granite any better? Similarly, if we analyze an artwork, are we able to get at its Being? Does it enable us to get to the core of the thing and apprehend its thingness?

In proposing that the core of the thing is that which is always and already there, Heidegger reminds us that these particular designations relate to the Greek experience of the Being of beings, or presence. He cites the Greek word, *hypokeimenon* as the core of the thing that was always already there, where 'the thing had free range to display its thingly character' (Heidegger 1977b:148-9). Heidegger laments that what was for the Greeks something which lay at the ground of the thing as always already there, has been fundamentally transformed in the modern era. In the shift from *hypokeimenon* to *subiectum,* this sense of presence has given way to that which lies before man. In the translation from the Greek *hypokeimenon* to the Latin *subiectum*, the thing in itself was subsumed under the mere character of the thing. What lay at the ground of the thing became the self-evident character of the thing as that which is set before us.

I read in the Real Estate section of Saturday's paper a sales advertisement for a 4 x 2 brick and tile house. In response to the designated characteristics or properties of the house, I conjure up an image in my mind. However, in this imagining, the "houseness" of the house disappears. It is subsumed by these descriptors. I already have a preconception of the house and as yet, I have not experienced its thingness. The characteristics are presented as self-evident. The house has four bedrooms and two bathrooms. In Heidegger's estimation, language, in its everyday use, does not reveal the thingness of the thing. In everyday language, the thing disappears amidst the thing-concept.[7] The thing-concept is representational thinking.

Heidegger proposes that what is now to us so "natural" as to be a self-evident characteristic trait, once struck man as strange and caused him to think and wonder. I ponder on the nature of this thinking and wondering and wonder how the early Greeks experienced it. Is it any longer possible to experience this thoughtful wonder? I think of children's play and how, in play, they become totally absorbed. Is the wonderment of a child's first encounter with something akin to this wonder? What of our own engagement with new things and experiences? Don't we experience wonder at the very nature of things before familiarity takes over? The problem, as Heidegger notes, is that once familiarity sets in, we tend to reduce the thing to its identifiable characteristics and no longer see the thing-in-itself. This city is noisy, technology has its own unyielding logic, a particular person is stubborn and a painting is just a painting. Once reduced in this way, these core characteristics colour the way things appear before us. As I argued in Chapter One, this representationalist thought prevents us from being open to that which lies before.

So how can we stop familiarity taking over? How do we return to the unfamiliar source from which it arose? Heidegger presents us with a second way of thinking about the thingness of things. If we are open to the manifold sensations that are presented to us, then perhaps we will experience the thing's thingness. The event of the techno-dance party could be cited as an example of where the throng of sensation overwhelms the senses. Here sensation overwhelms representational thought as the boundaries of "I", as *subiectum*, collapse into the collective techno-experience. In the combination of the beat of bodies, heat, music, vibration, lights and drugs, the techno experience creates an intensification that is oblivious to wisdom or to the limits of the organism:

> The lights transform everything into life and movement and blend the different colours into a magic coverall…. Every-one seems to develop a sense of urgent rhythm. (Piri Thomas quoted in Deleuze 1986:51)

This collapse into sensation may not operate according to the paradigm of representationalism. However, Heidegger is asking us a different question: Does it allow us to experience the thingness of the thing?

Here, Heidegger returns us again to the Greek notion of presencing. If we allow ourselves to experience the undistorted presencing of things, then maybe the thingness of things will be revealed. If we are open to things then perhaps they will move us bodily. In this presencing, Heidegger contends:

> The situation always prevails. In what the senses of sight, hearing, and touch convey, in the sensations of colour, sound, roughness, hardness, things move us bodily, in the literal meaning of the word. The thing is the *aisthēton*, that which is perceptible by sensations in the sense belonging to sensibility…. The concept later becomes a commonplace. (Heidegger 1977b:151)

But can we ever really be open to this profusion of unmediated sensations? No experience can ever be unmediated, not even for a newly born child. However, *what if* an unmediated presencing were possible? Imagine that for a moment. How would it present itself? How would it be experienced? What would it be like to be literally hit by a total profusion of sensations at any one moment—the colours, sounds, noises, smells, vibrations, movements, textures and temperatures—without differentiation? Would we be catapulted into an untenable chaos?

Just as a new and unfamiliar experience can provide a source of wonder, so it can also provide a sense of what it is to be overwhelmed by sensations. If I go to a techno-dance party or a rave what do I perceive? Am I so close "in sensation" that I can perceive the "partiness" of party or the "danceness" of the dance? Heidegger thinks not. He says that, 'we never really first perceive a throng of sensations' in the appearance of things. He continues: 'Much closer to us than all sensations are the things themselves' (Heidegger 1977b:151-152). Thus he would argue that I experience the "noisiness and liveliness" of the dance rather than, for example, hearing the bare acoustical sounds. In order to hear a bare sound, he avers, we have to 'listen away from things, divert our ear from them, i.e., listen abstractly' (Heidegger 1977b:152).

We have encountered this particular dynamic before in Heidegger's tool analysis. Just as readiness-to-hand is really only made visible when there is a breakdown and a tool becomes unready-to-hand, so nothing is bought to light in the throng of sensations. So Heidegger would argue that just as the relationship between language and the thing refuses to reveal the "thingness" of things, so the sensation of things also can not reveal it.

Having dispensed with two possible, but ultimately unsatisfactory ways of thinking through the thingness of a thing, Heidegger proceeds to present us with a third possibility. This possibility, suggests Heidegger, lies in the synthesis of matter and form. What is constant in the form-matter synthesis, says Heidegger, 'is the fact that matter stands together with a form. The thing is formed matter' (Heidegger 1977b:152). Clive Bell's notion of significant form

exemplifies this way of thinking about the thingness of the thing as it pertains to a work of art. For Bell, all works of art possess the quality of significant form. Significant form has nothing to do with the content of the work, but rather is effected by an aesthetically moving synthesis of lines and colours in a work.

Certain strands of aesthetics and art theory, particularly those influenced by Kant—for example, the work of Schiller—tell us that art is formed matter. Heidegger notes that where art is conceived of as formed matter, matter becomes 'the substrate and field for the artist's formative action' (Heidegger 1977b:152). According to this conception, artists could be said to shed light on the matter. In this view, as I will argue in the next Chapter, form is correlated with the rational, with light and knowledge, and matter with the irrational, with the dark and the unknown. The danger in this conception, says Heidegger, is as follows:

> If form is correlated with the rational and matter with the irrational, if the rational is taken to be the logical and the irrational the alogical; if in addition the subject-object relation is coupled with the conceptual pair form-matter; then representation has at its command a conceptual machinery that nothing is capable of withstanding. (Heidegger 1977b:153)

In Chapter One, we came to understand the dangers of representationalism, through our analysis of Heidegger's essay 'The Age of the World Picture'. Here, Heidegger re-iterates this danger by showing how the form-matter synthesis upholds representationalism. In Chapter Two, I have shown that Heidegger fundamentally disagrees with the proposition that matter is the substrate for the artist's actions. Rather, in 'The Question Concerning Technology', Heidegger presents the position that matter, together with aspect, circumscribing bounds and the artist are co-responsible for bringing art into appearance. Through these earlier discussions we have come to understand that Heidegger is deeply critical of the form-matter synthesis, and has shown that it does not provide us a way to think about Art's emergence. Matter becomes standing reserve, which is then taken and used by the artist as a means to an end. Accordingly clay is used to make a bowl whilst film stock is used to create a film. In a realist or illusionistic painting, paint is used in-order-to create an illusion. In this use paint disappears into usefulness. The form-matter synthesis traps us in an enframing mode of knowing.

Whilst he is critical of the form-matter way of thinking, Heidegger nevertheless recognises that it is not so easily dismissed. A painting or a thrown jug is a formed thing. The form-matter constellation seems to make commonsense.

To work through this puzzle, he distinguishes between "mere" things and "formed" things. Here we can return to the example of the block of granite and contrast it with the shape of a jug. Whereas, in a block of granite, the form is a consequence of the prior distribution of matter, this is not the case with the jug. The jugness of the jug, he suggests, prescribes the kind and selection of matter. Because a jug is required to contain liquids, it must be impermeable. Here we witness a reference to the notion of circumscribing bounds, as developed in the 'The Question Concerning Technology'. However, in the 'Origin of the Work of Art', he has yet to develop his understanding of indebtedness and co-responsibility and instead elaborates the idea of circumscribing bounds as usefulness.

The Bauhaus dictum "form follows function" exemplifies a situation where circumscribing bounds is seen to determine the form of an object or design. Here, in the foundations of contemporary design, we see that the interfusion between form and matter is determined by its purpose. Heidegger notes that where purpose determines form:

> Both the formative act and the choice of material—a choice given with the act—and therewith the dominance and the conjunction of matter and form, are all grounded in such usefulness. A being that falls under usefulness is always the product of the process of making. It is made as a piece of equipment for something. (Heidegger 1977b:154)

Again we hear echoes of Heidegger's tool analysis. However, in this analysis, Heidegger is much more critical. We are reminded of the instrumental interpretation of technology. In this case, matter and form are not the original determinants of the formed thing; equipmentality is. The formed thing is made as a piece of equipment for something.

I would like to return to the case of vacuum cleaners. Equipment and artwork may be seen to have affinities in that they are both produced by or in conjunction with the human hand. They could be conceived of as a form-matter structure. In this sense, my Hoover vacuum cleaner and Jeff Koon's *New Schelton Wet/Dry TripleDecker* may be seen to be similar. However, Heidegger argues that the artwork does not have usefulness as its key determinant. Whereas the use-object becomes available to be used by hands, the artwork is not. Thus, in contrast to my vacuum cleaner, Jeff Koons's *New Schelton Wet/Dry TripleDecker* is not available to vacuum the floors. It is not made because of its usefulness. Similarly, Duchamp's *Fountain* is no longer useful as a urinal. In both cases they become totally useless. In Heidegger's

thinking, an artwork is self-sufficient.[8] In this sense, it is closer to a "mere" thing than it is to the use-object.

Here, for Heidegger, the work of art sits precariously between being equipment and being a mere thing. What can this tell us about the thing-being of the thing? Can the Being of equipment, the form-matter structure, by which Heidegger claims the being of a piece of equipment is determined, provide Heidegger with a way of comprehending the thing-being of a thing? Because Art has become a self-evident "truth", Heidegger says it can not and claims that this is because Art has become a self evident truth. He questions whether the thingly character of a thing can come into view at all in the process of stripping off everything equipmental. Ultimately the form-matter structure of equipmentality goes no closer to the thing-being of the thing. In fact, according to Heidegger, it assaults the thing (Heidegger 1977b:156).

Finally, we can summarise Heidegger's objections to the three customary ways of thinking the thingness of the thing. Like the interpretation of the thing as a bearer of traits or a manifold of sensations, the form-matter interpretation results in the thingness of things getting lost in pre-conceptions about things. Heidegger suggests that these modes of thought, in isolation or in combination, have come to operate as totalising categories into which all experience is incorporated. Such modes of thinking categorise all experience, including our experience of things, equipment and work. Our experience is pre-conceived through the prevailing thing-concept. And so for Heidegger:

> Preconception shackles reflection on the Being of any given beings. Thus it comes about that prevailing thing-concepts obstruct the way toward the thingly character of the thing as well as toward the equipmental character of equipment, and all the more toward the workly character of the work. (Heidegger 1977b:156-7)

Heidegger demonstrates that the three customary ways of thinking the thingly quality of the work, hinder any effort to understand the origin of the work of art. Through this critique, he argues that the essence of art can no more be derived from higher concepts than it can by identifying the characteristics of actual artworks. It is, he says, self-deception to select characteristics from among given objects or derive concepts from principles (Heidegger 1977b:144).

Hence, Heidegger observes, 'it comes about that prevailing thing-concepts obstruct the way toward the thingly character of the thing' (Heidegger 1977b:156). Representationalist thinking obstructs the way towards the

thingliness of things, the equipmental character of equipment and the workly character of work. Under the grip of representational thinking, our preconceptions of things conceal the thingness of things and inhibit reflection on the Being of beings. Ultimately, Heidegger concedes, the most difficult task (at least for modernity) is to let a thing be as it is, let it rest upon itself in its very own essence.

A Work of Art Speaks

Where have we come in thinking the essence of the work of art? Not far it would seem. Despite all the tenaciousness that Heidegger allows us to muster, it seems stubbornly to resist formulation. However, in his elaboration of equipmentality, Heidegger has a hunch. Since equipment takes an intermediate place between mere things and work, he suspects that 'non-equipmental beings—things and works and ultimately all beings—are to be comprehended with the help of the Being of equipment (the form-matter structure)' (Heidegger 1977b:155). He again asks the question: What is the equipmental quality of equipment? He asks us to consider this without falling into the trap of preconception.

We have been asked this question before, albeit in relation to tools. In that context, we were told that tools were not merely things. The equipmental being of tools or equipment, is to be found in handlability, not in the contemplation of the thing just lying there. Levinas recognised the significance of Heidegger's formulation. Through the handling of the tool, Levinas affirmed, 'we gain access to it in a fitting and entirely new way' (Levinas 1996:19). This access to the tool does not follow upon representation.

What happens when a use-object is *also* the content of the work of art, such as in Koons's *New Schelton Wet/dry Triple Decker*, or Van Gogh's painting *A Pair of Shoes* (1886)? We no longer handle them in the same way as the vacuum cleaner or a pair of shoes.[9] In addressing this, Heidegger takes Van Gogh's painting of peasant shoes and presents us with a description of shoes, as realised in the work of art:

> But what is there to see here? Everyone knows what shoes consist of. If they are not wooden or bast shoes, there will be leather soles and uppers, joined together by thread and nails. Such gear serves to clothe the feet. Depending on the use to which the shoes are to be put, whether for work in the field or for dancing, matter and form will differ. (Heidegger 1977b:158)[10]

Heidegger's observation that form and matter will depend on whether the shoes are for working in the field or for dancing, seems a sensible conclusion to come to. High heel suede shoes will be of no use for chasing sheep in a muddy paddock, just as heavy Rossi work boots will not be useful on the dance floor doing the tango (although they may be very appropriate for line dancing). The equipmental quality of equipment rests in its usefulness. But Heidegger does not rest here. What is usefulness itself? How do we get at its usefulness? Referring to the example of the peasant woman standing and walking in shoes in the field, he argues that it is in the process of using equipment that we actually encounter the character of equipment. In other words, we will never discover the equipmental being of equipment unless we use it.

According to this line of reasoning, simply looking at Van Gogh's shoes won't get us any closer to understanding the truth of their equipmentality. Or will it? Heidegger expounds his view in the following way:

> From the dark opening of the worn insides of the shoes the toilsome tread of the worker stares forth. In the stiffly rugged heaviness of the shoes there is the accumulated tenacity of her slow trudge through the far-spreading and ever-uniform furrows of the field swept by raw wind. On the leather lie the dampness and richness of the soil. Under the soles stretches the loneliness of the field-path as evening falls. In the shoes vibrates the silent call of the earth, its quiet gift of the ripening grain and its unexplained self-refusal in the fallow desolation of the wintry field. This equipment is pervaded by uncomplaining worry as to the certainty of bread, the wordless joy of having once more withstood want, the trembling before the impending childbed and shivering at the surrounding menace of death. This equipment belongs to the *earth*, and it is protected in the *world* of the peasant woman. From out of this protected belonging the equipment itself rises to its resting-within-itself. (Heidegger 1977b:159-160)

Heidegger's description of the life of the peasant woman is disquieting. He romanticises her life, suggesting that she feels a 'healthy fatigue' and 'wordless joy at having once more withstood want'. What, I wonder, would she make of this summation of her experience?

Heidegger's projection is strongly criticised by Derrida in his chapter 'Restitutions' in *The Truth in Painting* (1987). Derrida is frankly disappointed that, in the midst of 'The Origin of the Work of Art', Heidegger's academic high seriousness degenerates into illustration:

> One is not only disappointed by the consumerlike hurry towards the content of a representation, by the heaviness of the pathos, by the coded triviality of this description, which is both overloaded and impoverished, and one never knows if its busying itself around a picture, "real" shoes, or shoes that are imaginary but outside painting; not only disappointed by the crudeness of the framing, the arbitrary and barbaric nature of the cutting out, the massive self assurance of the identification: "a pair of peasants' shoes," just like that! Where did he get that from? Where does he explain himself on this matter?… One follows step by step the moves of a "great thinker," as he returns to the origin of the work of art and of truth, traversing the whole history of the West and then suddenly at the bend in a corridor, here we are on a guided tour, as schoolchildren or tourists. (Derrida 1987:292-293)

Worse than his representationalism, is Heidegger's use of the peasant woman as a piece of equipment to illustrate a philosophical claim.[11] It is quite difficult to set aside Heidegger's projection (a preconception no less) to get at what he is really trying to say about the work of art. What protected belonging is he talking about? What causes the equipment to rise to its resting-within-itself?

The protected belonging turns out to be the experience of being placed in front of Van Gogh's painting of a pair of peasant shoes. As Heidegger puts it, the painting spoke. It let us know the truth (*alētheia*) of the shoes. In the context of our contemporary understandings of the image, this is an extraordinary claim. How can the work of art speak? Isn't Heidegger offering us his own "reading" of this work and aren't these meanings culturally constituted? Doesn't reception theory tell us that when we interpret a work, we interpret it from our own cultural and subjective perspective? Heidegger's romanticisation of the peasant woman's healthy fatigue demonstrates precisely this point. How then, can we take seriously Heidegger's claim that 'it would be the worst self-deception to think that our description, as a subjective action, had first depicted everything thus and then projected it onto the painting' (Heidegger 1977b:161)? How can the painting speak? What nonsense is this?

When faced with the work of art, it is true to say that the interpretation is coloured by cultural background and experience. In our struggle to understand the work of art, we resort to our preconceived ways of understanding it. We look at the work as a puzzle and try to find clues to make sense of it. We identify its core characteristics, sense the manifold sensations operating within a work and/or we try to take apart its form-structure. However, in the haste to

make (social) meaning, perhaps we miss something. Whilst it may be argued that interpretation opens up a work and enables us to gain a deeper apprehension of what forces are operating in the work (formal and semiotic for example), at another level it closes off possibility.[12] It forecloses the possibility of coming close to the thing-in-itself. Though Heidegger does not preclude experiencing a work of art at the level of thing-concept, he offers us a caution against the particular blindness that this can produce. And so for Heidegger:

> It is necessary to know about these thing-concepts, in order thereby to take heed of their provenance and their boundless presumption, but also of their semblance of self-evidence. This knowledge becomes all the more necessary when we risk the attempt to bring to view and express in words the thing character of a thing…. To this end, however, only one element is needful: to keep at a distance all the preconceptions … to leave the thing to rest in its own self, for instance in its thing-being. (Heidegger 1977b:157)

In other words, to allow the work of art to come near, one must keep preconceptions at a distance. Heidegger wants us to be open to the particular possibility that the image can be thought and experienced in quite a different way, as openness. If we are open, then we may find ourselves in a position where the artwork speaks to us, rather than remaining in a place where we are always calling the tune, always being masterful. Derrida also implores us to listen to the painting. If we listen to the painting he says, citing Artaud, 'it would "strip" us … of the "obsession" of "making objects be other"' (Derrida 1987:381). When the artwork speaks, it cuts through the thing-concept and allows us to come near the thing character of the thing. The being of the painting comes forth and speaks.

Creation and the Activity of the Artist

If the work of art has the capacity to speak, what role does the artist play in the process of creation? Whilst the workly character of the work is characterised by it having been created by an artist, Heidegger does not believe that creation is the act of the genius artist. Heidegger thinks that modern subjectivism has misinterpreted creation, 'taking it as the sovereign subject's performance of genius' (Heidegger 1977b:200). To create he insists, is 'to let something emerge as a thing that has been brought forth. The work's becoming a work is a way in which truth becomes and happens' (Heidegger 1977b:185).

In order to address the question of the creative work of the artist, Heidegger asks what differentiates creation from other forms of handicraft. They are, after

all, both forms of bringing forth. Here Heidegger distinguishes between bringing forth as creation and bringing forth as a mode of making. At first appearance it may seem that the potter and the sculptor and the joiner and the painter engage in the same procedure. Their work involves craftsmanship. However, as we have already seen, just as the essence of technology is not technological, so the essence of art is not to be related to the skill and craftsmanship of the artist. We remember that the Greeks used *technē* for both the activity of craft and art. They named both the craftsman and the artist as *technites*. However, in this definition, the Greeks were never referring to craftsmanship. *Technē* was a mode of knowing that was an unconcealing. Heidegger is emphatic: '*technē* never signifies the action of making' (Heidegger 1977b:184).[13]

If the act of creation involves letting something emerge as a thing rather than making a thing, what role does the artist play in createdness? Heidegger addresses this question obliquely. In great art, he argues, the 'artist remains inconsequential as compared to the work, almost like a passageway that destroys itself in the creative process for the work to emerge' (Heidegger 1977b:166). What does Heidegger mean by this? What is the experience of being like a passageway that destroys itself in the creative process? Heidegger does not elaborate. Yet this is the crux of my questioning.

According to the form-matter structure discussed earlier, an artwork comes into being through the artist's formative action. The artist's identity as creator is confirmed in this action. Yet in arguing that the artist is like a passageway that destroys itself in the creative process, Heidegger reverses the stakes. Art is given priority. The artist as passageway acts as the conduit through which art emerges. And in the creative process this passageway destroys itself.

What does Heidegger mean by this? There are too many great artists who have enjoyed long and fruitful careers to give this proposition credibility. Whilst Heidegger likens the artist to a passageway, he does not say that the artist destroys her/himself. It is the artist as passageway that destroys itself. What then, is the passageway? His trenchant criticism of representationalism and a corresponding critique of man as *subiectum*, as one who sets the world before him as an object for a subject, provides us with a clue. In the creative act, the passage may occur when the artist no longer sets the world before her/him as an object? Rather, in process, the artist allows a total openness to the Being of art, the essence of art?

Here I would like to establish a link between this assertion, and the refigured conceptualisation of the role of the artist as set out in Chapter Two. We recall

that according to such a re-conceptualisation, the artist no longer masters and is no longer the cause of art. Working with notions of indebtedness and co-responsibility, the artist is conceived of as one contributing element participating in conjunctions with other contributing elements in enabling Art to come forth. Such a role requires the artist to be open to the call of Art.

Heidegger's repeated reference to *hypokeimenon,* the Greek experience of being open to what-is, supports such an assertion. For the Greeks, as we saw in Chapter One, reality loomed up before man and confronted him in the power of its presence. In order to fulfil his essence, Heidegger noted that the 'Greek man must gather (*legein*) and save (*sōzein*), catch up and preserve, what opens itself in its openness, and he must remain exposed (*alētheuein*) to all its sundering confusion' (Heidegger 1977a:131). And so we pondered as Prometheus was tied to the rock, Pentheus dismembered by the Bacchae and Acteon changed into a stag only to be torn to bits by his own pack of hounds (Olkowski 1988:97).

Whilst we must in no way collapse "Greek man" and the "artist", I surmise that for each the task is similar. Both are concerned with openness to Being. Thus in order to fulfil her/his essence, it could be argued that the artist must remain exposed (*alētheuein*) to all of art's sundering confusion. The artist must be open to the Being of art.

Heidegger most clearly differentiates between the knowing of a *subiectum* and the knowing that involves openness, in his discussion of preservation. Just as a work is in need of creators, so he argues it is also in need of preservers. Preservation means for Heidegger, 'standing within the openness of beings that happens in the work' (Heidegger 1977b:192). For Heidegger, the standing-within of preservation is a form of knowing that is distinct from the knowing of a *subiectum* who sets the world before him as an object for a subject. Heidegger says:

> Knowing does not consist in mere information and notions about something. He who truly knows beings knows what he wills to do in the midst of them. (Heidegger 1977b:192)

In this statement, Heidegger differentiates between willing as a preconceived thinking (Nietzsche's "will to power"), and willing as the possibility of an ecstatic entry of the human being into the unconcealment of Being. It is not a question of imposing one's will, but of being willing to be open. This willing, or what Heidegger calls resoluteness:

> Is not the deliberate action of a subject but the opening up of human being, out of its captivity in beings, to the openness of Being.... Neither in the creation mentioned before nor in the willing mentioned now do we think of the performance or act of a subject striving towards himself as his self-posited goal.... Preserving the work, as knowing, is a sober standing-within the awesomeness of truth that is happening in the work. (Heidegger 1977b:192)

The ecstasy that accompanies the entry into the awesomeness of truth that happens in the work, provides a way back to Heidegger's statement that the 'artist remains inconsequential as compared to the work, almost like a passageway that destroys itself in the creative process for the work to emerge' (Heidegger 1977b:166). In the ecstasy of the nearness of the work, it could be argued that we are catapulted into a space that is somewhere else than we usually tend to be. In being taken out of the space of representationalism, we are beside ourselves. Here we can return to Chapter One and Deleuze's assertion that creativity involves becoming 'deterritorialized' and taking a line of flight.

It would be easy to read Heidegger's distinction between creators and preservers, as "artists" and "viewers", but I don't believe that is what Heidegger intends. There is no reason at all why beings should be divided into makers of art and viewers. Viewers are as much creators as artists are preservers. What is essential is this willingness to openness. Through openness, preservation sets the "work" of art in train. However, in remaining open to the confusion of possibility, there is also the danger of dissolution altogether. Deleuze and Guattari warn of this danger when they caution that, 'too wild a destratification will cause us to be dragged towards catastrophe' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:161).

For Heidegger, the preservers of the work, those who come to experience and apprehend the work of the work, belong as much to the createdness as the creators. In createdness, the work asserts that *it is*. Heidegger's insistence that this enables us to be transported out of the realms of the ordinary into an open region raises certain difficulties for "mere" mortals.

To be transported out of the realm of the ordinary, we must suspend our usual way of looking and thinking about the world. But how can we achieve this? Surely our preconceptions about what art is, mediate every experience of art? If we come to the work blinded by our intentions and preconceptions or armed with existing models of interpretation we won't ever be able to move beyond the ontic into the openness of Being. Where everything that *is,* is

standing reserve and at man's disposal as a means to an end, it is very hard for humans to let it be. For as Heidegger says 'as soon as the thrust into the awesome is parried and captured by the spheres of familiarity and connoisseurship … art business has begun' (Heidegger 1977b:193). Once the art business has been set in motion, we do not let the work be a work, but rather view it as an object, or worse still, as standing reserve.

How can the, *that it is* of createdness overcome the filter of representationalist thinking? Heidegger confirms that it is the most difficult of tasks to keep our preconceptions at a distance: difficult, perhaps, but not impossible. In order to stay with the truth that is happening in the work, we must restrain ourselves. We must just let it be. We are reminded that preservation requires great restraint. In order to let the work be work, we must preserve it. Preservation opens up the human being to the openness of Being. It enables us to step outside of the noise of everyday existence and reflect on what it is to be.

The Origin of the Work of Art

If the preserver and the creator belong to the createdness of the work, are they the origin of the work of art? Does the origin of the work of art lie in the eyes of the beholder as much as it lies in the actions of the artist? Heidegger says not. Art is the origin of the work and, as the origin of the work, it lets the creator and the preserver originate, each in their essence. And so Heidegger asks, 'What is art itself that we call it rightly an origin?' (Heidegger 1977b:196).

The assertion that art is the origin of the work of art may seem preposterous. It has been argued that art is a social construct, a consequence of social production, not vice versa. Heidegger would not disagree in as much as art business is a social production. However, Heidegger is neither concerned with art business, nor with the art object. He is concerned with the essence of art and for him this lies in the *work* of the work of art. The work of the work is the 'setting-into-work of truth…. Art then is a becoming and happening of truth' (Heidegger 1977b:196). Thanks to art, the creator and preserver open up into the open region, each in their own essence.

In the setting-into-work of truth, we are catapulted out of the ordinariness of our day-to-day existence and into the actuality of the work of art. Duchamp achieved this in 1917, when he signed R. Mutt on a urinal, titled it *Fountain* and exhibited it. Heidegger figures that such events jolt us out of our everyday habits and habitual ways of knowing and project us towards the possibility of Being. This forceful expulsion from our tenacious habits, or projection, is 'the

release of a throw by which unconcealment infuses itself into beings as such' (Heidegger 1977b:198). It is an event that brings about fundamental change. It moves us out of the world with which we are familiar and into a different opening. We become faced with the thing-being of the thing.

A critical question persists. How can we remain open to the thing-being, rather than being taken over by the thing-concept? Whilst Duchamp's *Fountain* created openness to the thing-being of the work, by rupturing preconceptions about the work of art, this does not necessarily hold for subsequent works that are similarly created.[14] Such works risk being quickly subsumed under the thing-concept, "the readymade". It is very difficult to escape the mode of thought that positions something representationally (in the Heideggerian sense), as a ready made, an abstract painting, a sculpture or a conceptual work of art.[15] In an encounter with Joseph Kosuth's *'One and Three Chairs* (1965), for example, how does one set aside the thought that it is conceptual art (the thing-concept) and instead be open to the work's thing-being? Is it possible, as Heidegger would argue, to 'let it rest upon itself in its very own essence' (Heidegger 1977b:157)? This as we have seen, is an extremely difficult task requiring resoluteness.

In a lecture entitled 'How is it There? An Open Letter to Marisa' (2000), John Berger attends to this question of openness. Through this lecture, he inquires into the secrets that painting holds about life. He turns to the work of painter Giogio Morandi (amongst others), to develop his theme. Morandi painted still life paintings. He was, as Berger claims, the most austere still life painter of all time. During his long life, he repeatedly painted the same dozen or so objects: 'his bottles, whose glass he painted white or red before painting them on canvas, his coffee pot, his two jugs, his carafe, his dried flowers, his sea-shells' (Berger 2000:19). At the level of the thing-concept, it could be claimed that Morandi is a still life painter. However, as Berger demonstrates, the "work" of (Morandi's) art is not concerned with the thing-concept. What emerges in the work is a struggle to come to the thing-being, rather than the thing-concept.

In attempting to draw out the stakes involved in this struggle, Berger delineates three distinct phases or periods in the work of (Morandi's) art. During the first period, from the 1920s to the 1940s, he argues that Morandi 'painted in order to approach the objects being painted. He gets closer and closer' (Berger 2000:19). In this closeness, or what Heidegger has termed "nearness", there is no attempt to achieve photographic precision; rather Morandi is concerned with feeling the presence of the object. As Berger observes, it 'is a

question of the presence of the object, almost its body temperature being felt (Berger 2000:19).

In the second period, between 1940 and 1950, Berger argues that Morandi is no longer the one who is moving. He senses that it is the objects that were approaching the canvas. 'He waited and they arrived' (Berger 2000:19). I am reminded again of Heidegger's description of the Greek world, where man is the one who is looked upon by what-is. In this world where man is looked upon by that which-is, 'reality looms up before man and confronts him in the power of its presence' (Heidegger 1977a:131).

Finally, from 1951 until his death in 1964, the objects in Morandi's paintings seemed to be on the verge of disappearance. It was not that they are faint, Berger notes, but rather 'they are weightless, in flux, on the frontier of existence' (Berger 2000:19). Berger's quest to understand these paintings, leads him to postulate that, what is of concern to Morandi is 'the process of the visible first becoming visible, before the object seen has been given a name or acquired a value' (Berger 2000:19). This, to my understanding, relates to what Heidegger means when he talks of the struggle to escape the shackles of preconception. In this way, Morandi's quest resonates with Heidegger's struggle to explain the truth (*alētheia*) of Art.

Whilst Berger is more concerned with affect, his reflections on Morandi's paintings have some correspondences with Heidegger's elaboration of Van Gogh's painting of the peasant shoes. Just as Van Gogh's painting is concerned with the disclosure of what the pair of peasant shoes *is* in truth, so Morandi's painting reveals how the becoming visible of visibility *is*. In order to enable his reader to understand Morandi's project of appearances, Berger asks us to:

> Imagine the world as a sheet of paper and a creator's hand drawing, trying out objects which don't yet exist. Traces are not only what is left when something has gone, they can also be marks for a project, of something to come. The visible begins with light. And as soon as there is light there is shade. All drawing is a shadow around light.

He continues:

> The marks weave together, quiver, alternate. And slowly the eye registers and reads the space which the coffee pot and the jug are going to occupy. In other words, the object Morandi paints can be bought in no flea market. They are not objects. They are places, places where some little thing is about to come into being. (Berger 2000:19)

In taking us on this journey, Berger hopes that we can remain open and allow the work to emerge out of the quivering matrix of painterly marks. The term "still life" becomes a misnomer when Morandi's paintings are experienced this way.

The Work-being of the Work

Berger's elucidation of Morandi's paintings returns us to Heidegger's conceptualisation of the work of the work of art. What is the work of (Morandi's) art? The place or places created in these paintings provide the context for Art, as some little thing to come about, to come into being. In the work or art, it is possible that the truth of Being sets itself to work. In fact, for Heidegger, herein lies the essence of art:

> The artwork opens up in its own way the Being of beings. This opening up, i.e., this revealing, i.e., the truth of beings, happens in the work. In the artwork, the truth of beings has set itself to work. Art is truth setting itself to work. (Heidegger 1977b:165)

Here we see the critical distinction between the work of art (as a verb) and the artwork (noun).

In extrapolating the distinction between the artwork and the work of art, Heidegger identifies the object-being of works (the artwork) and contrasts it with their work-being (the work of art). We are surrounded by artworks. They hang in galleries, on the walls of corporate businesses and in private and public collections. Art historians, theorists and critics talk about them while art dealers deal in them. In the meantime, large numbers of people emerge from art schools, identify themselves as artists and lay claim to the work of art.[16] In all this proliferation of activity, Heidegger suspects that we constantly encounter the object-being of work. However do we come any closer to the work of art; that is, to the work-being of the work of art and thence to Art as such? In order to come closer to the work-being of the work, Heidegger suggests that it would be necessary to allow *it* to stand alone. To enable the work-being of work to stand alone, he suggests that the work must be removed from all relations to something other than itself.

The modernist art gallery, the so-called "white cube", was ostensibly designed with the intention of allowing an artwork to stand alone. In accordance with 'laws as rigorous as those for building a medieval church', notes Michael O'Doherty, the modernist gallery provides a place for reflective contemplation:

> The outside world must not come in, so windows are usually sealed off. Walls are painted white. The ceiling becomes the source of light. The wooden floor is polished so that you click along clinically, or carpeted so that you pad soundlessly, resting the feet while the eyes have at the wall. The art is free, as the saying used to go, "to take on its own life". (O'Doherty 1986:15)

However, rather than enabling art to come to presence as Art, the white cube is replete with its own preconceptions which frame the work as "art". As O'Doherty notes, it completes the transposition from life to formal values. In other words, it sets up art business.

So how do we gain access to the work-being of the work if, as Heidegger has argued, the gallery obstructs access to the work-being of the work? To elucidate this dilemma, Heidegger contrasts the setting up of an exhibition in a gallery with the setting up of a Greek temple. Even though a gallery may be built according to laws as rigorous as those for building a medieval church and may aspire to being a cathedral for the worship of art, it is ultimately concerned with the visible, with the object-being of artwork, not with its work-being. In contrast, he claims that the "setting up" of a temple provides the conditions for the gods' coming to presence. In the splendour of the dedication and praise of the temple, god comes to presence.[17] In this splendour (or ecstasy), the 'holy is opened up as holy and the god is invoked into the openness of his presence' (Heidegger 1977b:169). This opens a space where, as David Levin suggests, 'extra-ordinary moments of local visionary unconcealment illuminate the presencing of beings *as a whole*' (Levin 1993:213).

When Heidegger cites the example of the temple, he is not referring to the actual physical structure of the gallery or the temple, but rather to a space/place that towers up within itself. He claims the work, in its work-being, demands it. Thus he notes that, in 'the dignity and splendour of the work of erecting, consecrating and giving praise, the work opens up a *world* and keeps it abidingly in force' (Heidegger 1977b:169). The work of the art opens onto possibility. In unconcealment (*alētheia*), the artwork opens truth in its own way.

For Heidegger, the work-being of the work consists in setting up a world and the setting forth of earth. What does Heidegger mean by a world and what does he mean by the setting forth of earth? How does the setting up of a world and the setting forth of earth exhibit in the work itself? Heidegger has already provided a clue in talking about Van Gogh's shoes. Here, he made the statement

that the shoes are equipment. Further, equipment belongs 'to the *earth*, and it is protected in the *world* of the peasant woman. From out of this protected belonging the equipment itself rises to its resting-within-itself' (Heidegger 1977b:159-160). How can we figure this?

We know from Heidegger's tool analysis that the ready-to-handness of equipment disappears in use. Hence in the case of the peasant woman, Heidegger suggests that, by virtue of the reliability of the shoes, 'the peasant woman is made privy to the silent call of the earth; by virtue of the reliability of the equipment she is sure of her world' (Heidegger 1977b:160). Whilst I have noted my concern about Heidegger's claims to know how the peasant woman would experience her world, this statement does reveal something important about his understanding of equipmentality. In this particular scenario, there is evidence of a double movement. The equipmentality of the shoes belongs to the earth, and in use the earth disappears. But in its disappearance or concealment it enables an unconcealment of the world.[18]

Here we become aware of the centrality of process. The work as work sets up a world. When Heidegger talks of the work setting up a world, he makes it clear that he is neither referring to the "world" as the tangible space of the physical world, nor of our preconceptions of what the world is. When the *world worlds*, it cannot be encompassed within the parameters of our representational frame. It cannot be set before us as an object for a subject. Rather it involves an opening up of the world in which the scope and limits of Being are experienced. Process is performative. It opens onto possibility and brings it into being. Heidegger terms this opening to Being, spaciousness.

In worlding the world, the work as work creates a spacious opening. At this abstract level, the work opens up Being to the possibility of possibility. In the next Chapter I will argue that this fecundity can be understood in terms of performativity, but firstly I want to return to the work of art as it is revealed in Morandi's paintings. Morandi's paintings provide spaciousness for the visible to first become visible, 'before the object seen has been given a name or acquired a value' (Berger 2000:19). They hold open the open region of the world and provide a dedicated place where some little thing is about to come into being. As Berger concludes, Morandi's work 'insinuates an infinity of becoming, of incompletion' (Berger 2000:19).

If the work of (Morandi's) art creates a spaciousness in which the work sets up a world, there also occurs the second complementary movement in which the work sets forth earth. In setting up of a world and setting forth earth,

Morandi's paintings can be compared with the peasant woman's shoes as encapsulated in Van Gogh's painting of peasant shoes. But what differentiates the actual peasant shoes from Van Gogh's painting of the peasant shoes? Here, we are reminded that the peasant shoes, unlike the rock are more than just a "thing". Their essence is inextricably tied to their funtion. They exist in-order-to. In equipmentality, as we have seen, what is ready-to hand disappears in use. Matter is used up or rather it disappears into usefulness. Matter disappears in form-matter. The leather in the peasant shoes disappeared in usefulness. As we have seen, this in-order-to belongs to the realm of enframement. In contrast, in the work of art, matter emerges for the very first time.

In his bid to demonstrate this, Heidegger turns again to "temple-work". Temple-work, is the work of setting up a world in such a way that allows the work-being to emerge into the open region of the work's world. In contrast with equipmentality, the setting up, or setting forth, of the work-being of work does not cause the material to disappear. It emerges into the clearing. In this setting forth:

> The rock comes to bear and rest and so first becomes rock; metals come to glitter and shimmer, colours to glow, tones to sing, the word to say. All this comes forth as the work sets itself back into the massiveness and heaviness of stone, into the firmness and pliancy of wood, into the hardness and lustre of metal, into the brightening and darkening of colour, into the clang of tone, and into the naming power of the world. (Heidegger 1977b:171)

In its work as work, temple-work sets matter forward into the openness for the very first time and keeps it there. Two things are important here. First, Heidegger emphasises that the material emerges for the very first time. Temple-work, or the work of the work of art, is a constant renewal, never a sheer repetition. Secondly, in the setting forth of the material, the work sets itself back. This setting back of itself, Heidegger calls earth. 'In setting up a world, the work sets forth the earth…. *The work lets the earth be an earth'* (Heidegger 1977b:172).

In the unconcealment there is an opposing movement. In unconcealment, there is also concealment. In the setting forth, colour may come to rest and bear and so first manifest its "colouredness" in all its brilliance; however any attempt to quantify and qualify this setting forth is doomed. Under rational analysis, the colour withdraws. Measuring the wavelengths of colour reveals nothing about the colouredness of colour. In this elaboration, Heidegger

reiterates his argument against techno-calculative man and the obsession with mastery of the earth. In Heidegger's estimation, *earth* is a cunning trickster that will defy any attempt to pin it down. Under the microscope of human curiosity, it slides away. In the setting forth, the work sets itself back. It is self-secluding. In each self-secluding, he claims, there is the same not-knowing-of-one-another. Whilst the work of art unfolds in an inexhaustible variety of modes and shapes, rational means will not bring it into the open region of the world and keep it there.

The unfolding of work in the open region of the world is the realm of performativity where the logic of practice, not rationality, operates. In this realm a not-knowing-of-the other contrasts with representationalist knowing of *subiectum*. An object is no longer set before a *subiectum*. In this movement or flux, the artist becomes like a passageway that allows for the emergence of Art. As I will show in the following Chapter, it is through process or performativity that representation can escape the domain of representationalism.

The Equipmental-being of the Work of Art

Whilst the work-being of the work of art sets-to-work the truth of art, its equipmental-being is identified as its usefulness for something. We can see this in contrasting the mason's use of stone with a sculptor's handling of stone. In contrast with the mason who uses up stone, Heidegger suggests that the sculptor only uses up stone when the work miscarries (Heidegger 1977b:173). Similarly in using pigment, the painter does not use colour up, but rather sets it forth and allows it to shine. In this distinction, Heidegger makes it clear that the equipmental-being is of a different order from the work-being of the work. Whilst the equipmental being of the work involves "use value", the work-being of the work consists in the setting up of a *world* and the setting forth of *earth*. In the unity of *world* and *earth*, the work-being of the work comes to rest in itself.[19]

For Heidegger, "truth" and "usefulness" appear to operate in different registers and "truth" is of a higher order than is "usefulness". But this seemingly easy distinction becomes more ambiguous if we consider the historical existence of people as one instance of beings. Heidegger insists that, in its essence as an origin, art is 'a distinctive way in which truth comes into being, that is, becomes historical' (Heidegger 1977b:202). What then, if the defining character of contemporary art lay in its equipmental-being? What if, in a modern technological era, the "truth" that was set to work, was its equipmental-being?

In a technocratic epoch, it is so easy to confuse the work-being of the work with its equipmental-being. In our efforts to design the world, the equipmental aspect of the work is revealed and the work-being of the work stays under cover. Heidegger recognises this folly when he says that 'we have unwittingly taken the work as equipment to which we then also ascribe a superstructure supposed to contain its artistic quality' (Heidegger 1977b:164). This "misconception" comes to the fore in our current writing and theorising about art. Contemporary "artspeak" confirms this assessment.

In order to illustrate my claim, I wish to demonstrate the unwitting way in which both art theory and art criticism, have contributed to the enframing of art, so that it is revealed in its equipmental-being. In demonstrating how equipmentality underpins all the business of art, from artistic creation, art appreciation and enjoyment, I want to return to the question of how or whether, in the midst of the equipmental-being of art, Art can emerge.

I have already alluded to the contemporary tendency to conceive of art in semiotic terms. In the current, but waning domination of art theory by semiotics, art has been theorised in terms of its sign-function. Art becomes a sign. A sign, says C.S. Peirce, is 'something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity' (Peirce 1932:135). Heidegger takes this definition of the sign and reveals how, when categorised as a sign, what-is becomes an item of equipment:

> A sign is not a Thing which stands to another Thing in the relationship of indicating; it is rather *an item of equipment which explicitly raises a totality of equipment into our circumspection so that together with it the worldly character of the ready-to-hand announces itself.* (Heidegger 1962:110)

According to such an assessment, a sign can be seen to function equipmentally. It has an "in-order-to" quality. As a sign for communicating meaning, then, art is also revealed in its equipmental-being. The problem is that, in thinking about art in terms of use value, the work of art gets used up. It disappears into usefulness.

If contemporary art is conceived in terms of its sign quality and if, as Heidegger argues, a sign is an item of equipment, what can we say about the distinctive way in which truth comes into being, that is, becomes historical? How, in the contemporary context, can we reconcile the work-being of a work with the equipmental character of contemporary art?

The problem with semiotics, as with any such representational thinking is that it pre-conceives all immediate experience of beings and being and obstructs the possibility for openness to Being. Thus, for example, where an artwork is figured as a sign, it is difficult for it to be conceived as anything other than a sign. Theorised only in terms of its sign function, art is reduced to its equipmental-being. This enframing mode of revealing threatens to foreclose every other mode of revealing. We become to busy interpreting the many codes that make up the work and the meanings that belong to these codes to ever allow us to be open to the presence of the work, to allow the thing character of the thing to come near. Semiotic understandings of the work of art are not unique in reducing art to its equipmental-being. Interpretive schemes, as we saw at the outset, have the propensity to grasp, divide, classify and reorganise processes into usable data. They are, in essence, reductive and equipmental.

Art practice can also displays such a propensity. In illusionistic painting, as I have previously noted, the medium is used in-order-to create an illusion (form-matter). Paint is used to up to make a picture. In this use, the "matter of paint" disappears into usefulness. Bryson supports this assertion when he argues that western representational painting used up paint, rather than allowing paint to come into being as paint. In his thinking, paint was used as an erasive medium to cover the tracks of the paint's work:

> What it must first do is erase the surface of the picture-plane: visibility of the surface would threaten the coherence of the fundamental technique through which the Western representational image classically works the *trace*, of ground-to-figure relations: 'ground', the absence of figure is never accorded parity, is always a *subtractive* term.… The pigment must equally obey a second erasive imperative, and cover its own tracks … stroke conceals canvas, as stroke conceals stroke…. The individual history of the oil painting is therefore largely irretrievable, for although the visible surface has been worked, and worked as a total expanse, the viewer cannot ascertain the degree to which other surfaces lie concealed beneath the planar display: the image that suppresses deixis has no interest in its own genesis or past, except to bury it in a palimpsest of which only the final version shows through. (Bryson 1983: 92)

Bryson is referring to the realist tradition that aimed to arrest movement and fix an object for a subject. In this tradition, paint was useful in making an illusion of reality. Paint as "matter" disappeared into its equipmentality. In

this use of art to conceal art there is the intimation that the equipmental character of illusionist painting conceals the work-being of the work of art.

The formalist critic, Clement Greenberg, also claimed that illusionistic art dissembled the medium, using art to conceal art (Greenberg 1992:755). It was his belief that art should call attention to art in order to bring out the essence of art. As the foremost exponent of Modernist—or what has become known as formalist—painting, he championed those artists including Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland and Jackson Pollock, whose abstract work focussed on the specific qualities of paint. What was specific to painting, he claimed, was the flatness of the surface, the shape of the support and the properties of the pigment. For Greenberg, each art form had to be pared back to its "pure" and unique qualities. He claimed that:

> The task of self-criticism became to eliminate from the effects of each art any and every effect that might conceivably be borrowed from or by the medium of any other art. Thereby each art would be rendered "pure", and in its "purity" find the guarantee of its standards of quality as well as its independence. "Purity" meant self-definition, and the enterprise of self-criticism in the arts became one of self-definition with a vengeance. (Greenberg 1992:755)

In this conception, narrative painting and illusionism were not proper to painting and therefore reduced painting's purity.

The self-definition that Greenberg claims for Modernist painting resonates with the self-sufficient emergence that Heidegger claims for art. The question remains: In its claim to purity, does Greenberg's Modernism get to the essence of art, as explicated by Heidegger? Are we any more open to the work-being of the work? Here we need to remind ourselves of the mode of thinking that reduces the thingness of the thing to its core traits, its characteristics and properties. Greenbergian formalism apprehends art in terms of its characteristics and properties. Heidegger would suggest that this brings us no closer to the thing-being of the thing, or the work-being of the work. Indeed, for Heidegger, the modern can only be representationalist.

Heidegger's insights on the equipmental-being and the work-being of a work prove instructive for setting out the limits of any analysis or interpretation of the work of art. Interpretive frames are necessarily representationalist. They reduce the continuous flow of practices to patterns or theoretical schemas. Thus a Greenbergian schema would focus on what is unique and irreducible in

any particular art form whilst a semiotic analysis would identify the operation of the way meaning is produced through the interaction of semiotic codes.

The limitation of this representationalist thinking can also be seen in approaches to practice. As a practitioner, I can be presented with a brief, which sets out the context for a work of art—an exhibition, a competition, a performance, a specific design or perhaps a public artwork. I could apply my knowledge of the formal and semiotic language of art quite consciously to the creation of the work. I can decide the meanings I want the work to communicate and design the work to achieve these. I can make preliminary sketches of the idea and produce a maquette or a prototype and present these prototypes before a selection panel. In all this analysis, in all this thoughtful designing, do we know any more about the work of the work of art?

Heidegger would strongly argue in the negative. Such a representationalist approach reveals the equipmental-being of the work, not the work-being of the work of art. Where the artist is engaged in the manipulation of existing signs as a way of conveying meaning and the equipmental character of the activity comes to the fore, it could be said that craftsmanship dominates. Sign work is akin to the work of the craftsman. It operates in the realm of the ontic, the realm of art business.

If we are to preserve the work within the openness of Being and ensure its independence so that a work of art can rest in itself, we need to avoid the danger of dragging the work into the sphere of mere lived experience. This resting of the work in itself is, in Heideggerian terms, the realisation of the essence of art or Art. However we must remember that art happens in the midst of beings as human beings try to negotiate the business of making, exhibiting and selling their work in a modern technocratic society. Given this context, then, the central question in this Chapter is not whether in the midst of art business, Art *can* be realised, but rather *how* in the midst of art business *is* Art realised?

The Historical Distinctiveness in Which Truth is Unconcealed

In 'The Question Concerning Technology', Heidegger argued that fine art as *technē* belonged within *poiēsis*. As *poiēsis,* art is openness before what-is. However, in proposing that 'at each time the openness of being had to be established in beings themselves by the fixing in place of truth in figure',

Heidegger suggests that in a very critical sense, art is essentially historical (Heidegger 1977b:201). Thus whilst, in the Greek era, the distinctive way in which truth came into being was *poiētic*, can we say the same of the modern technological era? Can we still say that *technē* belongs within *poiēsis*?

Heidegger tells us that the modern technological era is characterised by enframing as a mode of revealing. *Poiēsis*, like enframing is a mode of being's coming to presence. However in contrast with the openness before what-is of *poiēsis,* enframing involves an ordering and mastering of what is. Objects and equipment become absorbed into the totality of standing-reserve and lose their quality as objects. In the light of this assessment of the technological era, does *technē* become an enframing mode of being's coming to presence in the modern age?

The recognition of the historical nature of the mode of being's coming to presence as art, impacts on the way we apprehend the work of contemporary art. Do we apprehend contemporary art in the sense of *poiēsis* as *technē*, or do we conceive it in terms of enframement? If the distinctive way of coming to truth that characterises our contemporary age is enframing, is it folly to even speculate on *technē* as a *poiētic* mode of being's coming to presence as contemporary art? Bearing in mind Heidegger's belief that there was but for a short time, a magnificent era where *technē* as *poiēsis* held sway, it is little wonder that Heidegger takes up Hegel's concern that art can no longer count as the 'highest manner in which truth obtains existence for itself' (Hegel quoted in Heidegger 1977b:204). In this assessment, however, we can detect a blind spot in Heidegger's thinking. Whilst we may argue that in the modern era *poiēsis* is dominated by equipmentality, can we be sure that equipmentality didn't play a role in the way the early Greek's understood their world? In his romanticisation of early Greek thinking, Heidegger fails to acknowledge Greek culture, that is, the culturally mediated lived experience of the Greeks. How do we assess whether, at the level of culturally mediated experience, the distinctive way in which truth came into being was *poiētic*?

Heidegger's emphasis on the distinctive way in which truth comes into being is the critical point here. Along with the scientific and technological changes brought by modernisation, modernity has transformed the way truth comes into being. Hence in modern technocratic society, where it could be argued that all beings could be perceived to fall under usefulness, isn't the Being of beings necessarily realised differently? Since Art as the setting to work of truth belongs to Being, is it possible that the truth of Art has changed in some fundamental way? In recognising this possibility, Daniel Palmer notes:

> Because the technological understanding of being has gained such an all-persuasive hold, across cultures and sectors of human affairs, there is the possibility that we will be so swept away in this single manner of revealing as to cut off for good the possibility of future ways of revealing … [and] there is the danger that in our absorption in the practices that embody this mode of concealing we will completely cover over its character as revealing. (Palmer 1998:409)

Thus in contemporary times art is not the saving claim, that Heidegger claims for it. In falling under the sway of enframing, the potential for art to open up our understanding of Being and revealing has been concealed. This, Heidegger would claim, is the space where art business as opposed to Art thrives. How must we negotiate that?

In concluding this Chapter, I want to return to the questions I posed at the outset. Firstly what, if any, truth is set to work in a technocratic era and secondly is it possible to make Art, in the Heideggerian sense, in the contemporary world? If as Heidegger proposes Art is, 'in its essence a distinctive way in which truth comes into being' (Heidegger 1977b:202), and if the distinctive way that truth comes into being in a modern technological society is in its usefulness, what can we say about contemporary Art? How, in the midst of art business, can Art emerge?

I have argued that the historically distinctive mode of revealing in the modern technological age has changed beings. I believe that this necessarily changes the way in which art as truth happens. Art is revealed in its equipmental-being. The value of Heidegger's lesson is that he reminds us that a work of art is not already or even a sign, nor just an image or even just a flat two dimensional surface with pigment on it. If we are open to the work of the work, we are open to possibility. However when Heidegger makes the statement that the sculptor only uses up stone when the work miscarries and that the painter does not use colour up, but rather sets it forth and allows it to shine, he maintains a distinction that privileges the truth over "equipmentality". In this, he forecloses the possibility that the work of art may operate in multiple and differential relations. I would like to return to my earlier comments about Heidegger's blind spot in relation to the early Greeks. Whilst he maintains that the distinctive mode of revealing for the Greeks was *poiētic*, he does not address how the lived experience of the Greeks mediated the mode of revealing that prevailed. Is it possible that the Greek experience of things oscillated between their work-being and their equipmental-being? In his explanation so far, Heidegger's fundamentalism does not allow a

work to move between its work-being and its equipmental-being. Surely the work of art may set forth and allow colour to shine *as* it tells a narrative, reveals a pair of shoes or presents a group of bottles. If the work of art does not invoke this multiplicity, I don't believe Art can be realised in the midst of art business in contemporary society.

Heidegger's critique of art business warns us of the danger that an enframing mode of revealing poses for contemporary society. However, even whilst recognising that worlding the world involves being-in-the-world, Heidegger's ambivalence about socially mediated lived experience or cultural thinking creates an unresolved tension. He worries that where the ontic experience of be-ings becomes an obstacle to Being, lived experience may be the element in which Art dies. In his concern, that we can become caught up in the ontic realm of human be-ings and forget the question of Being in itself, Heidegger inadvertently sets in place an opposition between the ontological and the ontic.[20]

McHoul suggests that Heidegger's critique of cultural thinking neglects the possibility that there might be an essence of culture. Thus McHoul believes that Heidegger's obsession to expose the limits of cultural thinking, leads him away from questioning culture in its essence. Here Heidegger forecloses the potential for a mutual reflection between the ontic and ontological. In the next Chapter, I will argue that lived embodied experience enables us to question Being in itself. In this way I will show that the relational mutuality between the ontic and the ontological is the dimension in which Art thrives.

In a time when art business dominates, I would argue that it is crucial to read Heidegger on art. We are thrown into life and get carried along by the demands of living. We rarely stop to ponder and wonder. Art is an event of stopping; of making an open clearing in the noise of the everyday. We quite literally express this in our words and actions. When I work, I have to clear my desk, clear my studio so that I have an open space in which to work. At a more abstract level, Heidegger identifies the work of art as creating the clearing in which Art might happen. In the middle of life and in the middle of the work unconcealment unfolds. This I think is the central lesson of Heidegger's essay. Whilst Art may be the privileged site in which unconcealment happens, we have seen that it may not happen in the realm of art business. If Art is to be an essential and necessary part of the Being of beings, then it is in the midst of beings that Art must happen. Everyday activities such as cooking, gardening, renovating and eating may be experienced as *poiētic* rather than instrumentally. In the next Chapter, I will argue that the concept of performativity allows us to understand how Art occurs in the midst of life.

4

SHEDDING LIGHT FOR THE MATTER

The first three Chapters of this book are concerned with the relevance of Heidegger's thought for rethinking the question of artistic practice. Heidegger's meditations on representation, on the question concerning technology and the origin of the work of art have been very instructive in my own thinking about the work of art. They provide a framework for a sustained critique of western subjectivist interpretations of art and present a counter-representationalist reformulation of the work of art. However, whilst Heidegger's critique may provide us with the conceptual tools for a critique of western models of thinking about the work of art, I would suggest that his thinking remains embedded in western Enlightenment metaphorics. In Heidegger's work, this metaphorics presents itself specifically in the way the beneficence of light allows truth (*alētheia*) to be revealed. Thus, in the 'Question Concerning Technology', we are 'summoned to hope in the growing light of the saving power' (Heidegger 1977a:33) and in 'The Origin of the Work of Art', light 'joins its shining to and into the work' (Heidegger 1977b:181). It is as light, that what is concealed comes to be revealed. I would suggest that in his particular figuring of art and technology as a mode of revealing, Heidegger fixes us yet again in the light of the European sun.

Heidegger was a German philosopher whose experience of the world was predicated on the assumed illuminating quality of European light. His thinking about art as a revealing, is grounded in an assumption that (sun)light does actually have the capacity to reveal "something". In place of the reflected light of Plato's cave, Heidegger posits the revealing power of (sun)light. For him, reflected light can only ever reflect on the ontic condition of beings, whilst, (sun)light, on the other hand, has the capacity to reveal the Being of beings. However, I would question whether this assumption always holds. Heidegger's attitude towards light is metaphysical and this attitude is carried through in his metaphorics of light. Further, his framing of the ontological and ontic is Eurocentric. It fails to take into account a different ontology.

In this Chapter, I want to consider light from the point of view of an Australian living in the glare of an Australian sun. Viewed from this optic another question emerges: What if there is *too much* light? What if, in the glare of the midday sun, nothing is revealed? I will argue that, in a particular Australian context, that of Western Australia, the "actual" experience of light necessitates a reconsideration of the photological underpinnings of Heidegger's thinking. It is my contention that we need to grapple with the facts of another sun-light, one that is no longer revealing, but insinuates itself in the "facts of matter".

According to a Heideggerian position, my assertion could be seen to fall into the "merely ontic". We have already witnessed how, according to Heidegger, the human tendency to get caught in the "merely ontic" limits possibility. Everyday opinion, he contends, 'sees in the shadow only the lack of light, if not light's complete denial' (Heidegger 1977a: 154). However, according to my own experience of the "glare", I am compelled to ask: What if, in the glare of the midday sun, there is no shadow? Nothing is concealed, yet nothing is revealed. In this context, the metaphorics of light comes up against a limit and runs out. I return to the realm of the ontic, but with an eye, still, on the ontological. What can my mere experience of light tell us about the Being of art, for example?

We recall from the previous Chapter, that work unfolds in the open region of the world. In the unfolding, we recognize that the worlding of the world is concerned with being-in-the-world, that is, process. It is through the performativity of process that world is opened up and the scope and limits of Being are experienced. Here I will draw out the relational nature of the ontic and the ontological in order to show that the life of be-ings can create movement in Being in itself. Rather than the ontic experience of be-ings presenting an obstacle in the way of Being, lived embodied experience enables us to question Being in itself. In this Chapter, I demonstrate how the experience of the Australian light brings into question assumed understandings of the illuminating quality of light. Through this elaboration, I will argue for a different understanding of the Being of art.

European figurations of light do not correlate with the type of understanding that comes from living with the glare of the Australian sun. Visual practice may be inconceivable without a consideration of light; however I propose that it is equally inconceivable to practise under European notions of light, when in the glare of Australian light. Too much light on the matter sheds no light on the matter. The Australian glaring light is not the kind of light that

'joins its shining to and into the work' in the same way that Heidegger claims for a (European) revealing kind of light.

In the glare of the Australian sun-light, I query Heidegger's heliophilia and suggest that his understanding of the work of art as unconcealment (bringing-to-light), does not take into account another sun-light. In his formulation of the work of art as transfiguration, it is the refulgent quality of the sunlight that allows truth to be illuminated and to shine forth. In the dazzling glare of the Australian sun, however, this does not figure. In the glare, no-thing is brought to light. The "matters of fact", emerge out of the thickness or "fuzziness" of practice. In this fuzziness, acts and decisions occur in the heat of the moment and shed a *different* type of light from the light of rational thinking.

I will argue that the glare of the Australian sun fractures the nexus between light, form, knowledge and subjectivity, or what Heidegger has termed the form-matter structure. Instead, I propose that the glare produces a massive movement of deterritorialisation that reconfigures the relationship between light and matter. In this reformulation, I suggest a shift from shedding light *on* the matter to shedding light *for* the matter.

I theorise this movement according to the performative principle of *methexis*. Paul Carter describes *methexis* as a 'non-representational principle that involves an act of concurrent actual production' (Carter 1996:84). As an act of concurrent actual production, *methexis* is transformative and not merely representational. It engenders a material transformation that is not of a representational kind. In this material transformation, I show that *methexis* moves beyond the transfiguration that Heidegger claims for art.

Shedding Light on the Matter

> Secrets are discoverable, they say, bones, mistakes, the passage of blood through the body. And is it not the case that this unveiling as it were, this great moment of truth has a luminous quality that circulates such that knowledge claims a moral category and sets itself the task of "shedding light on the matter"? (Wilson 1997:3)[1]

We still like to "shed light on the matter", such is our belief that light reveals, unveils, illuminates, makes perceptible and renders legible our relation to the world in which we live. The metaphorics of light provides language with a rich vocabulary with which to shed light on the matter. Josephine Wilson's ironic coupling of light, truth and knowledge in her post-colonial performance work,

Geographies of Haunted Places (1997), lays open the metaphysics of light that underpins these metaphors of light. It is a metaphysics that has informed European philosophy from Plato's cave until its apotheosis in Enlightenment thinking and beyond. Wilson is not paying homage to the Enlightenment. *Geographies of Haunted Places,* sketches the way in which the colonisation of Australia was achieved and rationalised under the Enlightenment. In Wilson's writings, "light" becomes one of the technologies complicit in the colonisation of countries, peoples and bodies. Colonisation took place through light, and vision was its logical collaborator. As Wilson so eloquently puts it:

> And *Vision*, being the prerogative of Kings, Captains, cartographers, scientists and priests it is not surely just and right that the Discoverable should inhabit a space of perpetual darkness—silent, inert, suspended in the amniotic fluid of blind possibility, waiting, waiting for the surgeon with his knife. (Wilson, 1997:3)

The unknown would become known. In the heliophilia of Enlightenment thinking, the relationship between light, knowledge and truth is assumed, and it is through vision that this nexus is achieved.

In *Downcast Eyes: the Denigration of Vision in the Twentieth Century* (1993), Martin Jay describes the "logical" co-existence of light and vision. He observes that in western thought, light has been conceptualized in terms of the distinction between *lumen* and *lux*. Light, understood as the perfect linear form that operates according to the laws of geometric rays, was defined as *lumen*. *Lumen* was seen to be the essence of lumination. In contrast, *lux* emphasized the actual experience of human sight (Jay 1993:29). This dualistic concept of light as *lumen* and *lux* complemented the dual concept of vision. On one hand, vision was conceived as observation with the two eyes of the body; whilst on the other, as speculation with the eye of the mind.

Western philosophy has oscillated between—and attempted to reconcile—observation with the eyes (empiricism) and speculation with the eye of the mind (reason and mysticism). However whilst empiricism and rationalism may belong to two distinct historical trajectories, Levin argues, that both are underpinned by a shared ocularcentric genealogy that has its roots in the Greek idea as *eidos*. *Eidos* is that which is made visible or that which is offered in appearance. In empiricism, suggests Levin, ideas are directly linked with perceptual experience. The 'idea is, in the most literal sense, an abstraction prised away from the perceptual object that is its source and referent' (Levin 1993:197). What we "see" is an idea (*eidos*) or representation of the appearing object. In rationalism, on the other

hand, the idea is a prototype. It is prior to our worldly experience. As a prototype, Levin contends that the idea is 'paradigmatic for perceptual experience; it is the source of the possibility of perceptual experience and the referent for the illumination of the meaning that the perceptual object is given' (Levin 1993:197).

Informed by rationalism, Enlightenment thinking fixed on the eye of the mind, but as reason, not mysticism. According to Jay, this thinking was characterised by speculation, or the 'rational perception of … clear and distinct forms with the unclouded eye of the mind' (Jay 1995:29). Under this optic, matter had no meaning, until the mind imposed form on it (Audi 1995:271). In Hans Blumenberg's discussion of the relationship between light, knowledge and truth, he suggests that light was the medium at man's disposal to bring clarity to his vision (Blumenberg, 1993). And so we must question the assumption that truth has a luminous quality and that light is at man's disposal so that he can shed light on the matter.

The relationship between light and matter is a vexed one. In Enlightenment accounts, light is always shed on the matter. There is never any passage *from* matter *to* light. Three contemporary philosophers, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Emmanuel Levinas and Luce Irigaray, have been critically engaged in rethinking the relationship between light and matter. All three are in agreement that the relationship between vision and embodiment forms the nexus of signification. However Irigaray has taken exception to Merleau-Ponty's and Levinas's blind-spots on questions of matter. In her opinion, such blind-spots reinforce a gendered reading of matter. In *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* (1993), Irigaray has developed a different genealogy of light, a genealogy that takes into consideration the passage between matter and light. She refigures light through touch, to take into account sexual difference. She considers light in terms of matter. I am also concerned with the passage from matter to light.

In *Textures of Vision: Vision and Embodiment in Irigaray, Levinas and Merleau-Ponty* (1994) Catherine Vasseleu elaborates Irigaray's position on light. Through Irigiray, she argues that in Enlightenment philosophy, light is assumed to be a neutral medium that allows us to see and understand. She explains:

> One strategy is the use of light as a source of universal illumination, or noble bond between existence and truth. This strategy, which treats light as a metaphor, separates matter from illumination. A second strategy is to use light as a common end, as an objective, which can be universally achieved, and the most desirable means for making things accessible. Here light is regarded as a transparent medium, which offers no resist-

> ance to incorporation. A third strategy is the figuration of light as a dazzling inchoate medium which once rendered legible, forms the basis of subjectivity. (Vasseleu: 1994:176)

According to this paradigm, light is the source of universal knowledge, which serves as a as an objective to be universally achieved. Here light provides the metaphor for rational intelligibility that underpins western understandings of human subjectivity. Given the nexus between light and vision, it is not surprising that the photological tenets of western philosophy also underpin its forms of visual representation. In visual representation, light creates a unified vision of the world through its ability to render form legible. Form and content are revealed through the light that falls on objects.

Heidegger made the observation that Plato already knew that there could be, 'no outward appearance without light' (Heidegger 1977b:386). This seems so self evident that it is rarely even questioned, even by the philosopher who set about to question all that had been thought in the history of metaphysics. Heidegger's heliophilia prevents him from seeing that light is a logical conspirator in representationalist thinking. He assumes light to be a neutral medium that allows the world to be unconcealed. In fact, in 'The Question Concerning Technology', Heidegger couples light with freedom:

> Freedom is that which conceals in a way that opens to light, in whose clearing there shimmers that veil that covers what comes to presence of all truth and lets the veil appear as what veils. (Heidegger 1977a:25)

Heideggerian scholars suggest that, in substituting visual metaphors with aural metaphors, Heidegger works to overcome the ocularocentrism of western philosophy.[2] For example in his assertion that the artwork speaks, Heidegger shifts the terms in which art is understood. We no longer just look at the work of art, but we need to *listen* attentively to what it has to *say*. However his language remains filled with visual metaphors. In 'The Origin of the Work of Art', the voice of the artwork takes on a decidedly luminescent shine. He says 'the more essentially the work opens itself, the more luminous becomes the uniqueness of the fact that it is rather than is not' (Heidegger 1977b:190). Moreover in this essay, he tends to mix the visual and the verbal. Thus, 'language, by naming things for the first time, first brings beings to word and to appearance' (Heidegger 1977b:198).

'The Origin of the Work of Art' was an attempt to open up the work of art to quite a different way of thinking art, one that was no longer grounded in the

form-matter structure. It is in its mode as revealing, that art allows 'unconcealment as such [to] happen in regard to beings as a whole' (Heidegger 1977b:181). However, in Heidegger's formulation, we remember that it is light that joins its shining to and in to the work. 'This shining, joined in the work is the beautiful' (Heidegger 1977b:181). According to the understanding offered in this essay, then, unconcealment is a bringing-to-light. Unconcealment involves light.

Heidegger's blind-spot on light is best illustrated with reference to his critique of the form-matter structure, the structure that he claims underpins representationalist thought and especially art history and aesthetics. We remember his concern that 'if form is correlated with the rational and matter with the irrational, if the rational is taken to be the logical and the irrational the alogical; if in addition the subject-object relation is coupled with the conceptual pair form-matter; then representation has at its command a conceptual machinery that nothing is capable of withstanding' (Heidegger 1977b:153). However, in his claim that the form-matter structure provides the '*conceptual schema which is used, in the greatest variety of ways, quite generally for all art theory and aesthetics*' (Heidegger 1977b:153), Heidegger fails to take into account the role of light as actor.

I agree with Heidegger that it is through representational practices that matter becomes transformed; matter attains a legible form. However, in Chapter Three, I made the observation that, according to the form-matter structure, artists could be said to shed light on the matter through their formative actions. In this observation, I make a connection that is missing from Heidegger's critique of the form-matter structure. Here, light enters into the equation. Light becomes coupled with rationality, form and the subject. It is light that gives coherence to representation's conceptual machinery. In this conception a certain correlation begins to emerge:

LIGHT	=	FORM	=	KNOWLEDGE	=	SUBJECT
DARK	=	MATTER	=	UNKNOWN	=	OBJECT

Thus form is correlated with light, rational knowledge and with the subject, whilst matter is associated with the irrational, with the dark and the unknown. European notions of light enable representationalism.

The Glare

Heliophilia or the worship of the sun and the Australian light, has mythical status. In a forum on regionalism and the arts in Western Australia, artist Andrew Gaynor suggested that:

> The constant worship of sunlight and good weather so marks discussions about Perth. This constant worship is perceived as one of the problems of the way visual artists deal with Perth and Western Australia; so it would seem that everyone is permanently on holidays enjoying such warm and lovely weather. (Gaynor 1996)

He continues:

> But the point was raised that it seems strange for Perth artists to produce dark and gloomy art, or dare I say thought-provoking art. Couldn't it be seen as a manifestation of the frustration of these artists who are dealing with weightier issues in the face of constant warm fuzzies. (Gaynor 1996)

Gaynor was responding to an argument about the proliferation of the "dark" in artistic practice even in the face of the "bleaching out" produced by the intensity of the Australian light. It struck me then (and still does now) that Australian art practice continues to operate under European notions of light and within a predominantly European aesthetic.

Following the European model, the avant-garde project in Australia, is concerned with the sublime imperative of delving into the dark, the unknown and the unconscious, and of transforming matter into form. In this context light/dark, form/matter remain as binaries and it is the prerogative of the artist to present the unrepresentable; in short to shed light on the matter.[3] According to this logic, light (as already being known and knowable), is considered frivolous, the site of, as Gaynor puts it, "warm fuzzies" and no more. As a colloquial term used to describe an amorphous creeping feeling of warmth and well being, "warm fuzzies" is an affective corporeal experience. Given its corporeal foundations, I would suggest that it is this "fuzziness" that can become the site/sight for refiguring visual/philosophical practices. Fuzziness invokes notions of vibration, of thickness, an operation of a different register from the light/dark binary. It is neither known, nor unknown but in process.

My position has emerged from a sustained period of participant observation; of sitting under the sun in Kalgoorlie, trying to make landscape paintings. I have many more freckles, suspicious sunspots, pterygiums and deeply furrowed weather beaten-skin to show for it ... and a few paintings.

Kalgoorlie, a gold mining town about 700 kilometers east of Perth, Western Australia, is located in marginal desert country. Cloudless skies, low humidity, red earth, low scrubby vegetation, open mine pits and depthless mine shafts characterise the region. In winter, temperatures plummet to below freezing, whilst in summer, temperatures hover around forty degrees Celsius.

I had been making landscape paintings before I went to Kalgoorlie, but in this arid landscape, there was nothing to grasp hold of, no-thing to pin down. In the struggle to paint a representation of the landscape, the glare was so intense that no-thing at all was revealed. Moreover the landscape was so fractured and messy that no form emerged. It was impossible to use light to render form legible. The rules of linear and aerial perspective would not work either. The horizon remained but objects did not appear to get smaller in the distance. Nor did distant objects become more greyed out and diminish in sharpness and chiaroscuro in the distance. In fact, because of the lack of moisture in the air, the distant horizon often seemed more defined than the foreground and the colour appeared stronger there. As a result, the background seemed to jump over the foreground.

It struck me that, in a place where blinds are constantly drawn against the light, where people cover their windows with silver foil to keep out the light and heat, where the sun's glare blinds and where sunglasses serve a functional rather than a cosmetic purpose, it was time to rethink the relationship between light and form; light and knowledge.

In the "blind" light of the glare, light can no longer be assumed to equal form and knowledge. Light itself becomes unthematized, deterritorialised. Paul Carter points out that in glare, 'there is no point of access for the classifying eye' (Carter 1996:219). The glare takes apart the Enlightenment triangulation of light, knowledge and form. In fact light becomes implicated bodily, in the facts of the matter. My pterygiums and sun beaten skin, my mother and father's melanomas and the incidence of glaucoma implicate the sun in a very different set of processes. Within this context, I would argue that light can no longer be postulated as the catalyst that joins objects whilst itself remaining unbent and unimplicated. According to this observation, it is no longer useful to speak of "shedding light on the matter". How then can we rethink the relationship between light and matter? Perhaps the fuzziness that Gaynor spoke of can be recast in a different way; as the diffraction of light through matter, a process that implicates both light and matter in signifying practices.

The notion of the glare enables a refiguring of this relationship. "Glare" is a term that has contradictory or polar meanings. As a verb, "to glare" is to 'look with a fierce or piercing stare' (Delbridge et al 1997:900). Used as a noun, on the other hand, 'glare is a strong, dazzling light; brilliant lustre' (Delbridge et al 1997:900) or an 'oppressive light; tawdry brilliance' (Sykes1978:366). In the former sense, glare fixes; in the latter it undoes fixity and creates dispersion. The polar nature of the glare becomes a useful device for unpacking the assumed relationship between light and knowledge and provides a point of departure for rethinking the work of art.

Scheining Glare?

I want to return once more to Heidegger's critique of representationalism as a starting point for such a refiguration. As Heidegger has demonstrated, the western view of the work of art has been figured in terms of the form-matter structure. In this view, he points out: 'Matter is the substrate and field for the artist's formative actions' (Heidegger 1977b:152). It is through the en*light*ened actions of the artist that matter is formed into the work of art. In this conception, as I have asserted, form is correlated with the rational, with light and knowledge; and matter with the irrational, with the dark and the unknown. Heidegger is correct when he observes that the form-matter structure provides representationalism with a conceptual framework that is so encompassing that it is extremely difficult to think art differently. When we incorporate light into this equation, the representationalist framework becomes even more formidable.

Given Heidegger's use of the metaphorics of light in elaborating his understanding of revealing and unconcealment, I think it is important to understand the thinking behind his use of light, or more specifically his use of sunlight. It is through engagement with Heidegger's use of the term *Schein,* that I will lay out the assumptions that underpin this thinking. *Schein* is a term that Heidegger activates in his meditations on art in his series of lectures on Nietzsche. In this context, Heidegger posits art as transfiguration. He proposes that, as transfiguration, art opens up higher possibilities that can neither be contained within logic nor explained by the possibilities of praxis. In other words, the work of art cannot be reduced either to logic or to the rational efforts of the artist engaged in the creative act. The transfiguring of openness is figured as the 'illumination of what is still unhazarded and therefore not yet at hand' (Heidegger 1987:237). This illumination, he says, has the character of '*radiant appearance*' (Heidegger 1987:237). He terms this *Schein.*

Heidegger identifies an essential ambiguity inherent in *Schein*. He differentiates between refulgence and illusion. Radiance as refulgence is conceived in the sense of sunshine. It is an illumination and a shining forth. Radiance as illusion, on the other hand, is a 'mere seeming-so (a bush near a path at night appears to be a man but is really only a bush)' (Heidegger 1987:237). The illusion or semblance is not of the same order as refulgence. For Heidegger, art as transfiguration operates in the realm of the radiance, resplendence and gleaming qualities of refulgence. Its light has the quality of the brilliance of the sun. Illusion, on the other hand is the way of seeing of everyday life. The brilliance of its light is much duller, dimmer and more superficial. As Levin notes, the brilliance of everyday appearing does not endure. It is mere semblance.

What is at stake, in this aspect of Heidegger's understanding of the work of art, is his configuring of art in terms of the shining light of the sun. How does the glare of the Australian sun figure art differently from the *Schein* of the European sunshine? Let me contrast the two terms. Whilst both *Schein* and the "glare" are related to the effects of sunlight, I would argue that their consequences are of a different order. As applies in *Schein*, there is an inherent ambiguity in glare. On the one hand, glare fixes, and on the other, it possesses the quality of dazzling brilliance. In its capacity to fix us with a fierce or piercing stare, the glare brings us to a standstill. On the other hand, in the sense that the glare is a strong dazzling light that is characterized by a brilliant lustre, it appears to correspond with *Schein*. The refulgent quality of *Schein* has this brilliance. However, it must be remembered that, in its dazzling brilliance, the glare is also oppressive. And in its oppressive and dazzling brilliance, the glare can cause us to flee. Under the light of the Australian sun the glare does not to allow, what Heidegger calls, the bringing-to-shining-and-appearing of art. Moreover in the middle of a summer's day, there are no shadows to flee to. In the Australian glare, Heidegger's metaphorics do not work. As light, the glare does not reveal what is concealed.

The glare suggests that Heidegger's sunlight-filled evocation of art as transfiguration needs to be rethought. What is art, then, if not a bringing-to-shining-and-appearing? The clue lies in the glare's capacity to turn and flee. In the quest to offer an alternative figuration, I turn away from Heidegger towards the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari. In their notions of 'faciality' and 'facialization', I find resonances with the movement of the glare.

In *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* (1986), Deleuze develops the polar nature of the face, using the analogy of the painted portrait. Sometimes, he suggests, 'painting grasps the face as an outline by an encircling line which traces the nose, the mouth, the edge of the eyelid' (Deleuze 1986:88). On the other hand, there

are times when painting 'works through dispersed features … fragmentary and broken lines which indicate here the quivering of the lips, there the brilliance of a look, and which involve a content which to a greater or lesser extent rebels against the outline' (Deleuze 1986:88). In the former tendency, or what Deleuze calls 'facialization/faceification', there is a fixing on an object. Here the 'face thinks about something, is fixed on an object … and the face has a value above all through its surrounding outline, its reflecting unity which raises all the parts to itself' (Deleuze 1986:88). This coding of the surface is representation, in the Heideggerian sense of the term. At the other end of this continuum, when painting works through dispersion, it escapes the outline and forms part of an intensive series. In this movement the parts do not reflect unity, or form, but rather 'successively traverse as far as paroxysm, each part taking on a kind of momentary independence' (Deleuze 1986:88-89). Like the dazzling glare, this produces a quivering fuzziness that disperses rather than creates unity. This tendency, Deleuze terms 'faciality' or 'faceicity *(visagéité)*'.

For Deleuze, 'facialization' is the mechanism by which we classify, stratify and fix. I would suggest this corresponds with the glare in its incarnation as a fierce and piercing stare. Operating at this end of the spectrum, 'facialization' and the glare are colonising movements. Deleuze and Guattari postulate a correlation between the face and the landscape that exemplifies this:

> Face and landscape manuals formed a pedagogy, a strict discipline, and were an inspiration to the arts as much as the arts were an inspiration to them. Architecture positions its ensembles—houses, towns or cities, monuments or factories—to function like faces in the landscape they transform. Painting takes up the same movement, but also reverses it, positioning a landscape as a face, treating one like the other. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:172)

It is much harder to sit under the sun and map the ground anew than to resort to the rules and guidelines presented in one's training. However, under the dazzling glare of the Australian light, the landscape manuals provided no help in coming to understand the ground nor in presenting it anew. As I have demonstrated, when one sits in this landscape under the oppressiveness of the glare, there is nothing to grasp hold of, no point of access for the classifying eye. The quivering of the light, the fragmentary and broken lines of the landscape, produce intensity and mark an ascent towards a paroxysm. Instead of being able to fix on an object, sitting under the sun provides, what Deleuze and Guattari describe as, a 'point of departure in a passional line in the process of sweeping away towards "realness" that is vertiginously asignifying, asubjective

and faceless' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987:187). In the intensity of the glare, the plane of organisation is ruptured, creating a massive deterritorialisation. The dazzling glare undoes fixity and in the glare of the sun's light, different strategies for mapping are required. These mappings are not representations; rather they trace the trajectory of the body in movement through space and time and in relation to place. These mappings are performative.

Methexis

In Kalgoorlie, it was strategically necessary to keep one's hat on and one's head down to avoid the glare, to prevent oneself falling down a mineshaft and to avoid stepping on broken glass or more lively ground creatures. This was also necessary in order to find paths others had trekked before. One always kept one's eyes to the ground, in order to be sensitive to, and aware of the folds, the contours, the inclines and the mess of the landscape. Paul Carter suggests that the gesture of hanging one's head (and this includes the political action of hanging one's head in shame), is the reverse of what happened to Indigenous Australians with colonisation and the coming of en*light*enment thinking. The induction of Indigenous Australians into en*light*enment ways of seeing the land involved a fundamental shift in looking. The action jerked the head upwards through ninety degrees, shifting the eyes from the ground to the horizon of linear perspective.[4] In this action, Carter argues, 'the horizon came into view and seeing was divorced from the dance' (Carter 1996:51).

Carter sees this re-orientation as a shift from *methektic* trace to representational image. Representation suggests that an image only stands in for objects, events and concepts. *Methexis*, on the other hand, is a 'non representational principle ... an act of concurrent actual production, a pattern danced on the ground' (Carter 1996:84). Carter derives his understanding from Cornford's elaboration of *methexis* in *From Religion to Philosophy: A Study in the Origins of Western Speculation* (1991). According to Cornford, *methexis* was a term used by Pythagoras to describe the relation based on participation. The particular relation characterised by *methexis* was one of participation and passage between the divine plane and the human plane. Cornford summarises this relation as:

> That peculiar relation, best called 'participation' (*methexis*), in which … a group stands to its immanent collective soul. The passage from the divine plane to the human, and from the human to the divine, remains permeable and is perpetually traversed. The One can go out into the many; the many can lose themselves in reunion with the One. (Cornford 1991:204)

Methexis is a term that has its roots in ancient Greek thinking. In this sense we are once again returned to pre-Socratic thought. However, used in the context of Indigenous Australian culture, Carter allows *methexis* another dimension. In the permeability of the passage 'from the divine plane to the human and the human to the divine' he acknowledges that the ritual performances of human beings can be fundamentally transformative. Thus in this context, the statement that 'the passage from the divine plane to the human, and the human to the divine, remains permeable and is perpetually traversed' (Cornford 1991:204) takes on a distinctly different understanding from that of Greek thinking. The passage is productive and the effects are, for want of a better word, "real". Performance produces real or material effects. It produces rather than represents reality.

In western philosophy and art, it is very difficult to think outside the paradigm of representation and posit a non-representational principle, particularly one that produces material affects. In a series of interviews with art historian David Sylvester, British artist Francis Bacon, reveals his struggle to articulate his painting practice as performative rather than representational. He attempts to grope towards the idea that the facts emerge in the matter. When David Sylvester asks him if he can throw light on the paintings, Bacon replies:

> I don't know what it's about myself. I don't really know how these forms come about. And I look at them as a stranger, not knowing how these things have come about and why have these marks that have happened on the canvas evolved into these particular forms. (Bacon in Sylvester 1980:102)

The suggestion of an evolution to, or "passage" from, matter into form, or forms breeding from other forms, is not a shedding light on the matter. This is suggestive of Irigaray's genealogy of light. Bacon envisages a kind of structured painting in which images would 'arise from a river of flesh' (Bacon in Sylvester 1980:83). Bacon overtly rejects the Cartesian claim that it is the mind which senses, not the body. On the contrary, it is the body that senses. With its possible relation to the brain, the mind could be seen as part of this sensing nervous system.[5] His concern is with making images 'as accurately off the nervous system as he can' (Bacon in Sylvester 1980:83).

In his rejection of reason and his attempts to return 'the fact onto the nervous system in a more violent way' (Bacon in Sylvester 1980:81), Bacon is referring to the potential of painting to exceed its own structures via a radical painting performativity. "Fact", in this sense according to Jay, is not the 'rational perception of clear and distinct forms with the unclouded eye of the mind' (Jay 1995:29).

"Fact", or rather "matters of fact", emerge out of the thickness or fuzziness of the practice. Rather than grasping the face as an outline ('facialization'), Bacon is concerned with escaping the outline and allowing for the quivering of lips, the fragmentary and broken lines. His concern is the experience where the painting of the portrait becomes, in Deleuze's thinking, an ascent towards a 'critical instant, prepares a paroxysm' (Deleuze 1986:87).

Bacon's painting operated against a backdrop of European light and perspective and was a reaction against the legacy of European representational practice. The *methektic* performativity I am proposing, however, has quite a different genesis. It is not merely a reaction against representation, but provides a different model of mapping the world altogether. The dazzling glare of the Australian light necessitates a downward look and an attention to the patterns and rhythms of the ground. It is a performative model where the "landscape" emerges through the tracing of patterns on the ground.

According to Paul Carter, *methektic* performativity has been integral to Indigenous Australians' cultural practices. Carter suggests that it was in the repressive movement of facialization that the Aranda people had their heads jerked upwards through ninety degrees, transforming the *methektic* trace into representation, participation into imitation. In the re-orientation to the horizon, seeing and moving become disconnected. Here, as Carter has noted, 'seeing was divorced from the dance' (Carter 1996:51). Seeing through the screen of en*light*enment made the Aranda people momentarily falter and, in doing so, lose their step and their rhythm.

Carter claims the shift from *methektic* trace to representational image took place when the Aranda men took up western modes of landscape painting after the visit of watercolourists Rex Battabee and John Gardner to their lands in the 1930s. The shift brought about by the introduction of European ways of seeing into the culture of Aranda people was then seen as "liberating". In the forward to Battarbee's book, *Modern Australian Aboriginal Art* (1952), T.G.H. Strehlow proposed that:

> The traditional habit of looking at everything from above limited the vision of the artist and frustrated his endeavours to express himself with freedom and clarity. The day of liberation came when white men first showed coloured pictures to the natives [who] now gazed with delight upon a world depicted as seen by eyes that have stopped staring at the ground in search of tracks and are looking instead at the landscape itself. (Strehlow quoted in Carter 1996:50)

Strehlow was viewing the world from a European optic, or more precisely from a Cartesian perspective. From this particular distanced, panoramic optic, vision was equated with clarity and rationality. Through the mechanics and metaphorics of vision, light was shed on matter. Carter, on the other hand, lamented that this jerking of the head upwards 'transformed the *methektic* trace into representation' (Carter 1996:51). For Carter, the consequence of entering the realm of representation was to 'enter the house of western history, with its books, its windows and doorways. It is no longer to see all around (with the ears as much as eyes) a radiating environment of tracks and breezes' (Carter 1996:54).

Carter argues for a philosophy that takes into account a different conception of the land and our relationship to it. His critique of representation and its relation to vision resonates with Irigaray's critique of western ocularocentrism. She argues that:

> Vision is effectively a sense that can totalize, enclose, in its own way. More than the other senses, it is likely to construct a landscape, a horizon. (Irigaray 1993:175)

In accord with Carter, Irigaray suggests that movement is a more adequate way of thinking the body than is vision. For her, 'moving through the world, across the universe of dancing, I construct more of a dwelling for myself than through vision' (Irigaray 1993:175). Her focus on "doing" suggests a non-representational principle, akin to Carter's elaboration of *methexis*. It is this non-representational principle that Carter suggests is 'behind Celtic, and Aranda, art, whose spirals and mazes reproduced by an act of concurrent actual production a pattern danced on the ground' (Carter 1996:84). These cultural productions or presentations, showings and manifestations, produced reality for the Aranda and Celtic peoples. *Methexis* is productive and performative, not representative.

Paul Carter's elaboration of the theory of *methexis* is, as I have shown, derived from his reading of Cornford's work on the origins of western speculation. Cornford traces the notion of *methexis* from Pythagoreas through to Plato. In talking of the "immanent" collective soul as opposed to a "transcendental" collective soul, Cornford reminds us that, for Plato, the immanent idea is infected with 'human flesh and colours and all sorts of mortal rubbish' (Cornford 1991:252). Thus it could be argued that the two-way passage between the many and the One and the One and the many, allows the One to be infected with the lived experiences and performances of mortals. Such a state of affairs challenges any sense of binary between the ontic and the ontological.

In evoking this peculiar continuum, I would like to draw some correspondences between *methexis* and Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of assemblages. In this understanding, as Thrift notes, the world is made up of 'provisional linkages of elements, fragments, flows, all of heterogeneous substance and status' (Thrift 1997:132). In Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the machinic assemblage, as I have previously noted, ideas, things, animals, humans all bear the same ontological status. And so Elizabeth Grosz proposes that assemblages are:

> Composed of lines, of meetings, of speeds, and intensities, rather than of things and their relations. Assemblages or multiplicities, then, because they are essentially in movement, in action, are always made, not found. They are the consequence of a practice. (Grosz, 1994:167-168)

It could be argued that this conception, with its emphasis on assemblages and multiplicities, movement, lines, meetings and speeds, travels well with the Pythagorean belief that 'the One can go out into the many; the many can lose themselves in reunion with the One' (Cornford 1991:204).

In this conception, the relationship between the "many" and the "One" is not one of opposition, but rather exists in a continuum. This can be exemplified in the relationship between Indigenous performers and their totemic ancestors in ritual ceremonies. Here the performer is simultaneously totemic ancestor and human self. Thus while 'the Emu man still feels he is an Emu; the feathers he puts on, the gait he emulates, are his own…' (Carter 1996:71). Carter observes there is never any question of the artist, dancer or singer confusing himself with the power invoked (Carter 1996:82). In the performance of language, dance, painting, singing and other rituals in the Aranda tribe, the emphasis is not on what the dance/song/painting represents, but rather on what it can do and what effects it will have. *Methexis* is productive.[6]

Through this example, we can return to and clarify the particular understanding of *methexis* that Carter invokes in relation to Indigenous Australian cultures and distinguish it from the pre-Socratic understanding elaborated in Cornford. In pre-Socratic thinking, the "many" refers to the actual things that exist in the world, whilst the "One" refers to the unified cosmos. Thus, actual emus may be seen to belong to the "many", whilst the "One" is the eternal collective understanding that is emulated by the Emu man. This relation of the "many" to the "One" comes together in Plato's under-

standing of Forms. In Carter's elaboration, however, there is a dimension that cannot be contained by this formulation. This relates to Carter's claim that *methexis* is an act of concurrent actual production.

I want to return to Cornford's claim that *methexis* involves a "peculiar" relation in which the 'passage from the divine plane to the human, and from the human to the divine, remains permeable and is perpetually traversed' (Cornford 1991:204). The permeability of the passage is critical to Carter's elaboration of *methektic* performativity. In Indigenous Australian culture, ritual activities are predicated on the capacity of the performance to traverse the plane between the human and the divine. Ceremonial performances do not just have symbolic value. They produce real effects both on the human and on the divine plane. Here we may return to the Emu man. The Emu man is not just emulating the "eternal idea of emu". Rather, through his performance as the Emu man, the passage between the human and the divine is traversed.

Whilst representation suggests that an image only stands in for objects, events and concepts, *methexis* is performative; a concurrent *actual* production which has real effects in the world of humans and on the divine plane.[7] The performative presentations, showings and manifestations of everyday life ensure that the balance between the human and the divine is maintained. Every action and every utterance plays its part in this performative balance. Thus Carter argues that, for the Aranda people, language is also *methektic*. The language system of the Aranda is an agglutinative system, which is drawn into rhythmic patterns. He suggests:

> Like the "dot" of the traditional Central Australian dot-and-circle painting, the verb stem always implies other dots, a pattern or grouping of marks. This implication does not arise from any pleasure we may find in turning isolated marks into visually significant patterns but grows from the fact that the dots are a physical trace of the jabbing hand, as palpably imprinting the surface as the euros' foot marks the ground. They are not the representation of ideas. (Carter 1996:66)

The dot, as John Welchman suggests, is 'a trace of/on the ceremonial site; a granular magnification of the original sand support; and a daub on the surface of the body' (Welchman 1996:257). Viewed at a distance, the dot matrix creates an oscillation, a pulsation. Under very close scrutiny, each dot is still palpable, a mark in the process of becoming. Viewed *methektically*, the dot doesn't become a sign that stands in for something, rather it is performative. The dot matrix is a deictic marker, a trace of the labour of the performance, not just of

one person, but also often of many. This argument is supported by Julie Dowling, an artist from the Yamatji tribe. She observes of the painters from the Balgo region, that:

> As the girls were doing it they were singing a song about it [and] they were doing the actions with it.… Each step means there's another step to go on and this part of the country is this part of the picture so that as you are acting out the dot, dot, dot, dot, dot; even the action in itself is quite rhythmical, but when you bring that into connection with the heartbeat and also I'm telling a story now; this dot connects with this dot; this story is about this ... the whole connection with the land comes from the process up. (interview with Julie Dowling, April 1997)

Until the introduction of canvas and acrylic to Aboriginal communities, the connection with the land was quite literal. Paintings were made from different coloured sands spread out on the ground in accordance with ritual. The sand paintings played a vital role in ritual activities, including increase ceremonies. The acting out of fertility rites involving dance, song and painting was not representative, but productive. This explanation suggests meaning and reality are constituted in the performance. Meaning is not arbitrary nor is it deferred; rather it emerges from actions and the interplay between country, cultural knowledges and materially constituted bodies, both individual and collective. *Methexis* shifts the terms in the economy of representation. Knowledge production is embodied and locally situated. *Methexis* has real effects in bodies and on the ground.

In Indigenous Australian ritual practices, the interplay between country, bodies and language produces a veritable production. Life is seen as productive. In this conception, instead of birth being seen as 'the first displacement, the first expulsion and ruin, it is understood as the primary emplacement, as the first choreography of the ground' (Carter 1996:84). This conception of birth as the first choreography on the ground is critical to rethinking what it is to be a desiring acting human being.[8] The focus on choreography shifts the focus from the actor, the act and the acted upon, to the action. As Carter observes:

> To perform, is always to perform something. There is never an actor on one side, something to be acted on the other, the two come into being through each other. (Carter 1996:82-3)

Carter has mobilised the term *methexis* to elaborate the relationship between the Aranda and their totemic ancestors; between the individual and the group;

between the group and the land. Aboriginal painting rhymes the rhythms of the landscape and the rhythms of the heart beat. The role Aboriginal paintings—both sand paintings and more recently acrylic paintings—play as a 'positive re-affirmation of an historical tradition' is central to an understanding of *methexis* (Carter 1996:80). It could be argued that the paintings produce a performativity where the language mimes the motions of the body and the landscape.

What is critical to this discussion is that performance is 'an act of concurrent actual production' through which embodied knowledge is produced (Carter 1994:84). Meanings emerge in the facts of the matter. Rather than meaning being revealed or clarified, it is through performance that social meanings are produced. This is *methexis* in operation and not representation. In this schema, the terms of the economy of representation shift. Images no longer stand in for or signify concepts, ideas or things, nor are images signs that ceaselessly circulate; rather, meaning is produced as an embodied, situated event. Imaging produces real material effects.

A Productive Materiality

Rachel Jones notes that, as a living tradition, *methexis* opens 'ways of thinking both a non-representational principle and a productive materiality invisible to the enlightened subject of western modernity' (Jones 2000:157). In this sense, she argues that *methektic* production provides modes of resistance to the hegemony of the European gaze. This "invisibility" provides the key to understanding the possibility of evading the disciplining procedures of a culture, which doubts anything that it cannot see. Thus Jones explains that, in the colonisation of Australia, 'European eyes could not and would not see anything other than *terra nullius* and remained blind to the value of other, pre-existing modes of living on and relating to the land' (Jones 2000:157). Because the subject of western philosophy sees nothing, it does not mean that there is nothing to be seen or done. In this context, *methektic* production can be figured as being accompanied by a double blindness, the blindness of the "enlightened" viewer not being able to see anything and the "blindness" of a practice that embraces the possibility (no, necessity) that things are happening.

Jones draws out the implications of shedding light for the matter in a *methektic* performativity when she states:

> Methektic performance does not involve active form-giving forces (light, the speculative gaze) shaping a passive materiality … the hand marking

> of the body or canvas is itself marked by the rhythms of dotting, just as the body tracing patterns on the ground through dance is itself patterned by that moment, as breathing and heartbeat change along with the configuration of limbs. (Jones 2000:157)

The assertion that *methektic* performativity does not have the character of the form-matter structure dependent on the form-giving force of light, but, is rather, a patterning that emerges in matter, requires that we think quite differently about the work of art. In one sense it echoes Heidegger's claim that, as a transfiguration, art cannot be defined by the non-contradiction of logic nor the feasibility of praxis (Heidegger 1987:237). If it cannot be contained within logic nor explained by praxis, how can we think about the transfigurative potential of the work of art?

We will recall that in his elaboration of the logic of practice, Bourdieu tells us that practice has a logic which is not that of the logician (1990:86). In the fuzzy logic of practice, he claims, there is an interchangeability between things. This fuzzy coherence or affinity among all objects of the universe—what the Stoics called *sympatheia tên holôn*—is a generative principle. Bourdieu argues that this:

> Affinity among all the objects of a universe in which meaning is everywhere and everywhere superabundant, has as its basis, or its price, the indeterminacy or overdetermination of each of the elements and each of the relationships among them: logic can be everywhere only because it is truly present nowhere. (Bourdieu 1990: 87)

Logic is concerned with developing statements that describe internally consistent claims about the relationship between things, that is, with logical or mathematical relations between statements about the world. I want to address the question of a productive materiality, not just a question of relations between statements. But I cannot achieve this if I persist with representationalist logic.

Logic is built on particular assumption about the relation between truth and fact. Logical truth can only be true if it corresponds with fact. In this coupling of logic, truth and fact, we can return to Heidegger's criticism of truth as correctness, as correspondence with fact. In 'The Origin of the Work of Art', he tells us that propositional truth is always correctness:

> The critical concepts of truth which, since Descartes, start out from truth as certainty, are merely variations of the definition of truth as correctness. The essence of truth which is familiar to us—correctness in representa-

> tion—stands and falls with truth as unconcealment of beings. (Heidegger 1977b:177)

Heidegger reminds us that we have to consider what lies underneath this worn out conception of truth as mere correctness. In the midst of beings, he claims, there is a clearing and it is thanks to this clearing that 'beings are unconcealed in certain changing degrees' (Heidegger 1977b:178). In this unconcealment, truth "happens".

As we have seen, this understanding of truth does not lie at all in correctness. Nor is there a logical connection with fact. In his reflections on Heiddegger's ontology, Levinas suggests that Heidegger's understanding of fact relates to his elaboration of throwness (*Geworfenheit*). In this formulation, "fact" refers to the experience of always already having been thrown into the midst of possibility. He describes this as the 'ontological description of "fact"' (Levinas 1996:24).

I would like to recall Bacon's desire to turn "fact" onto the nervous system, in an attempt to envisage a kind of painting in which images would arise 'from a river of flesh' (Bacon in Sylvester 1980:81-83). "Fact", in the Heideggerian sense, can be seen to resonate with Bacon's notion of "fact". It is not, as Jay reminds us, the 'rational perception of clear and distinct forms with the unclouded eye of the mind' (Jay 1995:29). Rather, it could be argued, that Bacon's matter of fact is precisely the experience that Levinas describes where *Dasein* has 'been thrown into the world, abandoned and delivered up to oneself' (Levinas 1996:24). "Fact", or rather "matters of fact", emerges out of the thickness or fuzziness of the practice.

Here I want to reinvoke Gaynor's comments on warm fuzzies and suggest that perhaps the fuzziness he talks of can be recast in a much more productive way. In the blind light of the glare, as I have argued, light itself becomes unthematised. Where there is no point of access for the classifying eye, matters of fact emerge out of the thickness or fuzziness of the practice. In my attempt to build a politics of practice from the ground up, I want to think through the fuzziness of practice.

Here I wish to return once more to Cornford's explication of *methexis*. Cornford notes that Plato took the Pythagorean relation of *methexis* and developed it in terms of his notion of Forms. Platonic Forms have tended to be understood to be transcendental, existing prior to our experience of entities. However, Cornford picks up on Plato's notion of the immanent idea and, through this, opens up his Forms to the effect of matter. He suggests that

Platonic ideas may exist as 'transcendental purity or as embodied, "present" in the things they inform' (Cornford 1991:252). To focus on Plato's transcendental form would trap us in the world of light. In this world, form is the a priori aspect of experience. In Cornford's discussion of Platonic Forms and Ideas, I find myself interested in the potential of the immanent or embodied idea, rather than the transcendental idea.

For Plato, the immanent idea is permeated with "earthly" substance. Thus, as the soul is 'filled by the body with passions and appetites and fears and all sorts of phantoms and rubbish, so the Idea, when it is involved in its visible embodiments, is infected with human flesh and colours and all sorts of mortal rubbish' (Cornford 1991:252). Whilst for Plato infection is negative, a contamination, I would cast it in quite a different light. For me this infection is productive. Thus the infection with human flesh and colours and all sorts of mortal rubbish suggests that the "idea" emerges in/through the flesh as an infection. It is mutable. Infection implies transmutation rather than stasis or replication of the same. My human flesh, my colour and my mortal rubbish are quite different from your flesh, colour and mortal rubbish. In other words, my flesh and my experience of the world give me a specificity, and give a specificity to my tactics and actions, even as I take my place in the social collective. The ontic and the ontological are mutually interdependent.

Transfiguration

An understanding that the immanent idea emerges in and through flesh, gives some substance to my argument that we may shed light *for* the matter. It suggests that the matter of flesh is productive. However, I want to extend my understanding of the productivity of matter by returning to Heidegger's formulation of the four modes of occasioning. We recall that in the 'Question Concerning Technology', Heidegger argues for co-responsibility in the creation of the artwork. According to this account, the silver chalice is not conceived of as formed matter and creation is not 'the sovereign subject's performance of genius' (Heidegger 1977b:200). Instead Heidegger proposes that the work of art evolves through the complex interplay between matter (*hyle*), aspect (*eidos*), circumscribing bounds, and the artist or craftsman. Heidegger suggests that this interplay of interacting forces is co-responsible for the chalice. In this constellation of forces, we note that matter (*hyle*) takes its place as co-responsible for the coming into being of the artwork. Through this transfiguration, Heidegger notes, the work of art does not cause material to disappear, but rather allows it to emerge for the very first time (Heidegger 1977b:171).

In Chapter Three, I concluded that Heidegger's assertion—that the four ways of being responsible bring something into appearance—granted agency to matter. I extended this discussion by introducing Haraway's material-semiotic actor. In this discussion, matter becomes one of the several conversationalists engaged in the process of making. Haraway's notion of the material-semiotic actor enables us to demonstrate the dialogic and emergent qualities of artistic practice. Heidegger's four modes of occasioning or being responsible and Haraway's material-semiotic actor provide us with a critical understanding required to challenge the form-matter interpretation of art. In this Chapter, I have made suggestions of a radical material nature that extends our understandings of the emergent qualities of artistic practice beyond modes of thought. In arguing for a *methektic* productivity, I have posited the notion that material practice is transfigurative.

As we have seen, Heidegger recognises the transfigurative power of the work of art. For Heidegger, transfiguration involves the 'illumination of what is still unhazarded and therefore not yet at hand' (Heidegger 1987:237). However, in his thinking, this metamorphosis involves a change in appearance and that, in turn, involves light. The transfigurative potential of performative practice that I am arguing for, on the other hand, does not involve the illuminating qualities of light. I am suggesting that transfiguration occurs through matter, not though light. It is in the chiasmus between country, cultural knowledges and materially constituted bodies (both human and non-human), that *poiēisis* makes anew. Seen from a Heideggerian perspective, it could be argued that what is unconcealed is the fact that material practice has material effects. This is what I believe Jones means when she talks of a "productive materiality".

A Materialist Politic

I am claiming that, instead of shedding light on the matter, *methexis* allows for a veritable production, which transforms rather than reproduces the same. Performance involves shedding light *for* the matter. In this conception, performance produces signification and signification in turn has real effects. Sign production is a *methektic* production involving the interplay of culture, bodies and languages. It is a becoming sign through matter.

What begins to emerge in the matter is a different sort of practice, a different politics of practice that is not tied to, in Cathryn Vasseleu's words, 'abstract illumination, metaphysical light, or a disembodied eye' (Vasseleu 1994:11). There is no longer a singular imaginary working here. The "facts" of painting emerge in and through matter. The performance of painting is shedding light

for the matter. Painting can then be said to operate *methektically* or, as Paul Carter puts it, as a 'communication, as an oscillation, as a contact across difference' (Carter 1995:84).

So where does thinking through matter take us? Christine Battersby's assertion that, in *methexis* 'a pattern begins to emerge from amongst the swirling shapes of relational ontologies', suggests a relational ontology of visual practice (Battersby 2000:14). This account of humans embedded in concrete situations of action returns us to the early Heidegger's elaboration of praxical knowledge and, in particular, his argument that the specific quality or character of a thing emerges in our practical dealings with it. Thus, just as hammering in a workshop shows up the web of significant relations, so in *methexis* a pattern begins to emerge from amongst the swirling shapes of relational ontologies. Heidegger's "dealings" become extended and enlarged in the process of *methexis* where, as Jones states, 'patternings emerge collectively through the rhythmic intersections of land and bodies' (Jones 2000:158).

Carter has applied the idea of *methexis* to elaborate the relationship between the Aranda and their totemic ancestors; between the individual and the group; between the group and the land. Is the term relevant for re-figuring contemporary cultural practices? Is it of strategic or tactical importance in plotting the way we move in the world? Can we build a different kind of politics from the ground up and postulate a "matter of facts" instead of shedding light on the matter.

I would agree with Carter when he argues that it is necessary to inhabit the world differently, 'to remove one's gaze from a horizon that is as much historical as visual' (Carter 1996:113). He suggests that we need once again to turn to tracing the patterns in the ground, since this would involve a 'different conception of movement, one that deepened grooves' (Carter 1996:113). My conception of movement is different: it involves not a deepening of grooves but sensing and moving with the rhythms in/through the ground, so that in the carnal acts between bodies (human and non-human), the presentations, showings and manifestations, can exceed their own structures in a radical performativity. Shedding light *for* the matter involves both an ecological and ethical challenge and presents a different conception of visual practice and visual aesthetics. Practice becomes imbricated in culture as an alternative mode of representation.

To think *methektically* is to think quite differently about the potential of visual practices. It involves thinking through matter. In the heat and the glare

of the Australian light, I have suggested a very specific critique can be launched against Enlightenment vision. In this view, visual art practice is not concerned with shedding light on the matter, but can be conceived of as the relations in and between matter. Here, I have begun to choreograph a movement from shedding light on the matter to shedding light for matter. In the final Chapter, I wish to extend Jones's explication of productive materiality in a move which reconstitutes contemporary understandings of performativity. Through this, I argue that the work of art is a materialising practice.

5

WORKING HOT: A MATERIALIST ONTOLOGY

> I perceive the referent (here, the photograph really transcends itself: is this not the sole proof of its art? To annihilate itself as medium, to be no longer a sign but the thing itself?). (Barthes 1981:45)

In the previous Chapter, I proposed that *methexis* was the performative principle that underpinned Indigenous Australian performative presentations, showings and manifestations. I argued that *methexis* was a non-representational principle involving an act of concurrent actual production that allows for a veritable production rather than representation. I concluded the Chapter by asking if the productive materiality of *methexis* was relevant for a re-evaluation of contemporary cultural practices. I pondered as to whether the principle of *methexis* was important for refiguring a different politics of practice, a practice that builds from the ground up and engages with the "facts of matter".

In this Chapter, I propose to demonstrate that the productive materiality of *methexis*, enables us to commence the task of developing a theory of practice that takes into account the matter of bodies and objects. Such a materialist account of creative practice questions both representational theories of art and the contemporary pre-occupation with the understanding of art as a sign system. I suggest that attention to the productive materiality of the "performative act" enables us to reconfigure our understandings of the work of art. Against the position that a picture is necessarily a representation, understood in the Heideggerian sense, or that the image-as-sign, bears little or no relation to a referent, I will argue that in the fuzziness of practice, there is the potential for a *mutual* reflection and transmutation between imaging and reality. In this monstrous performativity, the body becomes language rather than merely inscribed by language.

Deleuze's elaboration of the concept "flexion" and Charles Sanders Peirce's idea of semiosis provide me with the conceptual tools to think through the

question of how we might experience a work as both a concurrent actual production and a sign. Deleuze's concept of flexion enables us to apprehend how performativity is a process through which the body becomes language rather than merely being inscribed by language. Peirce's elaboration of the "dynamic object" and the "indexical sign" enables me to extend current conceptions of performativity. I will show that it is through process or practice that the outside world enters the work and the work casts its effects back into the world. Thus, I will argue that the material practice of art can transcend its structure as representationalist representation and in the dynamic productivity of the performative act, produce ontological effects.

In recognising the productive materiality of performativity, as a process that produces ontological effects, I take up Olkowski's provocation that, in some photographs, 'what is created, what is thought is no longer a sign within a symbolic system but becomes the thing itself' (Olkowski 1999:208). Through attention to the performative power of art, I would like to extend Olkowski's claim beyond photography to the *work* of art. I propose that the force of the work of art *can*, in Olkowski's terms, 'become more than the medium that bears it, so that it can transcend its structure as representation and as a sign' (Olkowski 1999:208). Matter is transformed in the exchange between objects, bodies and images. In this way, I will begin to sketch the shape of a radical material ontology of the work of art.

Performativity and Materialisation

In arguing for a productive materiality, two terms, "performativity" and "materialisation", become central to my proposition. In *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (1993), Judith Butler brings these two terms together and argues that performativity 'is the vehicle through which ontological effects are established' (Butler in Osbourne and Segal 1994:23). Butler is specifically concerned with the way that the performative speech act brings into being that which it names (Butler in Osbourne and Segal 1994:23). In her elaboration of performativity, Butler argues that materialisation emerges through performance. Materialisation is a process of sedimentation that results from iteration or citation (Butler 1993:15). In her account, repetition and recitation constitute our being in the world. It is through this productive performativity that ontological effects are installed.

Butler's theory of performativity is confined to the formation of the subject through discourse. In Butler's thesis, there is no subject who precedes the repetition. Through performance, "I" come into being. She argues that 'there is no

performer prior to the performed, the performance is performative [and] the performance constitutes the appearance of a "subject" as its effect' (Butler 1991:24). Is it possible to draw a distinction between Butler's performativity and the performative principle of *methexis*?

In an interview with Osbourne and Segal (1993), Butler distinguishes between "performance" and "performativity". Firstly, she proposes that while performance presumes a subject, the notion of performativity contests the very notion of the subject. She demonstrates this through a discussion of how discourse produces the subject:

> I begin with the Foucaultian premise that power works in part through discourse and it works in part to produce and destabilize subjects. But then, when one starts to think carefully about how discourse might be said to produce a subject, it's clear that one's already talking about a certain figure or trope or production. It is at this point that it's useful to turn to the notion of performativity, and performative speech acts in particular—understood as those speech acts that bring into being that which they name. This is the moment in which discourse becomes productive in a fairly specific way. So what I'm trying to do is think about performativity as that aspect of discourse that has the capacity to produce what it names. Then I take a further step … and suggest that this production actually always happens through a certain kind of repetition and recitation. So … I guess performativity is the vehicle through which ontological effects are established. Performativity is the discursive mode by which ontological effects are installed. (Butler in Osbourne and Segal 1994:23)

In this statement we may draw certain correspondences with Heidegger's understanding of "throwness" (*Geworfenheit*). We remember that, in this thrownness, we get caught up in the midst of everyday affairs. We come to address our Being as beings, through our dealings with the world. We also recall that, for Heidegger, these dealings are characterised by handlability and that handlability does not follow upon representation (Levinas 1996:19). Is it possible, then, that our concernful dealings or our handling of things can be seen as performative? Can we propose that Butler's peformativity, like handlability, involves a non-representationalist principle? Further, does Butler's claim that performativity contests the subject, stem from the fact that performativity fails to follow upon representation? If this is so, then performativity could be posited as a counter-representationalist understanding of our being-in-the-world.

In order to test this tentative proposition, I wish to extend my discussion of Butler's understanding of performativity. As we have seen, Butler suggests that performativity is a 're-iterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects it names' (Butler 1993:2). Whilst her elaboration specifically addresses the way in which sex and gender are materialised, there are some curious similarities between this and the way in which "art" becomes materialised. Art practice is performative in that it enacts or produces art as an effect. For Butler:

> Performativity is not a singular "act", for it is always a reiteration of a norm or set of norms, and to the extent that it acquires an act-like status in the present, it conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition. (Butler 1993:12)

It could be argued that artists engage with, re-iterate and question the norms of art (art business) existing in the socio-cultural context at a particular historical moment. Similarly, avant-garde art practice tends to conceal the conventions of which it is a repetition. The re-iteration that operates in an artist's practice produces a "naturalised" effect which we come to label as an artist's style. Butler's argument that the 'process of materialisation stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity and surface' (Butler 1993:9), can be exemplified in an artist's style. We can identify a work as an "Ana Mendieta", or a "John Constable" through the sedimented or habitual style that characterises their oeuvre or their body of work. Further, the disciplinary operations of art business encourage such repetition and re-iteration. It is to this sedimented or habitual style, that "art business" attributes value. Thus the sedimentation or stabilisation that produces the effect of boundary, fixity and surface is a consequence of the habit-provoking mode of discourse.

However, within the repetitive and reiterative behaviour, Butler figures that there exist possibilities for disrupting the "habit" or the "norm". Within the re-iteration, repetition or citation of the discursive law, too perfect performances, bad performances, excessive performances and playful performances create what she calls (de)constituting possibilities (Butler 1993:10). She claims that these performances parody and subvert norms, putting them into constructive crisis (Butler 1993:10).

Excessive and ironic performances and parodic re-iterations shift the ground of what is considered the norm. In political and artistic practices, these subversive performances have been employed strategically. The avant-garde, and more recently, feminist, queer and post-colonial practices have actively engaged in

prying open the gaps and fissures produced through re-iteration, in an effort to disrupt and to get outside or beyond the norm. Avant-garde artistic practices, in particular, have made strategic use of "too perfect", "distorted", "playful" and "inverted" performances in an attempt to create the "new". Feminist and postmodernist artists have consciously taken a parodic and ironic approach in their critique of modernism and its claims to intentionality, originality, genius and representation. However, as I argued in the conclusion to my first Chapter, it is possible that these self-conscious attempts to bring about the "ruin of representation" are in themselves representationalist. To parody, ironise, or perform in a distorted way, suggests a model or category against which to perform. Through such strategies, the work of art becomes concerned with the manipulation of existing signs. Here matter, as material substance, seems to have disappeared into discourse.

In her suggestion that matter is the effect of the stabilisation of the process of materialisation as a fixity, surface or boundary, Butler imbricates her definition of matter in discursive structures (Butler 1993:9). For her, the materialisation of matter occurs as a result of the operations of regulatory power. Thus she observes that:

> The fact that matter is always materialized has, I think, to be thought in relation to the productive and, indeed, materialising effects of regulatory power in the Foucaultian sense. (Butler 1993:9-10)

The regulatory power of discourse shapes what we can think and say about art and it has material effects. Foucault's discussion of the "author function" in 'What is an author?' (1984), attests to this. However there is another materialisation that seems to be excluded from Butler's account. In her concern with performativity as the 'discursive mode by which ontological effects are installed' (Butler 1994:23), Butler seems unable to account for the materialisation that occurs in the interplay between the "matter" of bodies, the materials of production *and* discourse. The materialisation that occurs in a material practice, particularly in visual practice, is far more difficult to access or analyse than is language.

What makes an "Ana Mendieta" or a "John Constable" recognisable is not just the materialisation of power in a Foucaultian sense (although that does produce effects), but also the specificity of the particular material process that produces, as its effect, a material work that is a work of art. The risk in privileging language and discourse is the result of a conflation of "to matter" and "to materialise" with meaning or signification. Vicki Kirby argues that Butler's

strategy of returning matter to the sign, allows the stuff of matter to slip away (Kirby 1997:108). Butler quite clearly admits to the problem. She acknowledges that:

> To think through the indissolubility of materiality and signification is no easy matter. If matter ceases to be matter once it becomes a concept, and if a concept of matter's exteriority to language is always less than absolute, what is the status of this outside? (Butler 1993:31)

Does this leave matter unthematised until discourse imposes some form on it? In returning matter to the sign, what happens to the matter of bodies, objects and the matter of materials in this materialisation? Is there a space for an act of concurrent actual production, a materialisation of matter that does not just *mean*, but has "real" effects?

In Butler's theorisation of matter and materialisation, Kirby finds 'we are only ever dealing with the signification of matter rather than the stuff of matter' (Kirby 1997:107). Just when we are getting close to dealing with what happens in the interaction between the matter of bodies, objects and materials, matter eludes us. Kirby continues:

> Our sense of the materiality of matter, its palpability and its physical insistence, is rendered unspeakable … for the only thing that can be known about it is that it exceeds representation. (Kirby 1997:108)

Despite Butler's claims that the body 'bears on language all the time' (Butler 1993:68), she conflates "to matter" and "to materialise" with meaning and thus ultimately locates her understanding of matter in signification. She urges that 'to return to matter requires that we return to matter as a sign' (Butler 1993:49). Kirby argues that, in this linguistic turn, matter as such slips away (Kirby 1997:108).

The "sign", as elaborated in Butler's work, rests on the Saussurian notion of the sign. Saussurian semiotics is a linguistically based model that focuses on the play of the signifier. In this model, where the play of signifier is privileged, the referent no longer plays a part and, as a consequence, matter is effaced. For Butler, as Kirby argues, the representation of matter is something ultimately separable from matter itself (Kirby 1997:109). For Butler, the 'referent persists only as a kind of absence or loss, that which language does not capture, but instead, that which impels language repeatedly to attempt that capture, that circumscription – and to fail' (Butler, 1993:67). In Butler's framework we can

only know matter through the sign. The energy and insistence of matter can not be accommodated.

In taking on Saussure's notion of the sign and a psychoanalytic understanding of the relation between language and the real, Butler is caught in a paradigm that can only ever conceive of the representation as a substitute, as a sign of, or for something other than itself. In this paradigm, the representation stands in for or signifies the thing, but can never be the thing. According to this model, Kirby argues, there is a loss or an absence that 'language is unable to repair' (Kirby 1997:109). In her adherence to psychoanalytic notions of lack, Butler's claim to infuse matter with a constitutive energy fails. Instead she re-asserts the inevitability of logic and ideality. I believe that we need to return to the energetic potential of matter if we are to disrupt the inevitability of the logics of loss, ideality and language. In order to advance my argument for a productive materiality that acknowledges the insistent and energetic potential of matter, I wish to contrast Butler's understanding of performativity with that of Deleuze, as developed in *The Logic of Sense* (1990) and 'He Stuttered' (1994b).

A Radical Lingual Performativity

Butler and Deleuze draw on speech act theory to develop their respective ideas of the performative. Butler looks to Searle and Austin, whilst Deleuze focuses on Austin alone. Though both are concerned with the power of the performative to perform the actions they name, each has developed quite a different understanding of performativity. In her preoccupation with gender formation, Butler privileges the discursive effect that language has on producing subjects. Hence in her framework, performativity is the 'discursive mode by which ontological effects are installed' (Butler in Osbourne and Segal 1994:23). Deleuze, on the other hand, goes beyond the discursive. Following Austin, his interest is in 'positioning bodies in a field of forces' (Olkowski 1999:227). Here, performativity involves the body becoming language rather than merely being inscribed by language. Thus whilst Butler is concerned with signification and meaning, Deleuze takes up the forceful and transformative potential of language and suggests that it is through process or practice that performativity effects a deformation at the level of matter rather than form.

Deleuze's elaboration of repetition or re-iteration takes us on a trajectory that is suggested but not followed through by Butler's theorisation. His commitment to an ontology of change, and interest in creative practice, has resulted in a productive turn not envisaged in Butler's model. Whilst, for Butler,

repetition is repetition of the norm, repetition of the same, Deleuze argues that 'repetition produces only the same of that which differs' (Deleuze 1990:289). For Deleuze, repetition is not repetition of the same, or equivalence to a norm. Rather repetition or re-iteration is found in the 'intensity of the different' (Deleuze 1990:289).

'Repetition produces only the same of that which differs'. This phrase hightlights the critical difference between Butler and Deleuze. Whilst, for Butler, there is no "I" prior to the performance, performativity *does* produce the effect of boundary or fixity. For Deleuze, on the other hand, each performance, each repetition involves different intensities, different flows, and different connections so that each repetition is *always* a singular behaviour. Deleuze draws on literature and art to support his assertion. In his analysis of Pierre Klossowski's *Le Souffleur,* Deleuze points to the character Roberte as exemplifying this intensive singularity. As he notes, Roberte designates:

> An "intensity" in herself; she comprises a difference in itself, an inequality, the characteristic of which is to return or to be repeated. In short, the double, the reflection, or the simulacrum opens up at last to surrender its secret: repetition does not presuppose the Same or the Similar—these are not its prerequisites. It is repetition, on the contrary, which produces only the "same" of that which differs, and the only resemblance of the different. (Deleuze 1990:289)

Such an intensive singularity is not just the domain of fiction. The intensity of the different operates in artistic repetition. Following Deleuze's line of reasoning Olkowski notes that it is counterproductive to speak of an artist's work in terms of stylistic unity. Rather, she notes that while a 'series may resonate in relation to one another, there is no genus or species drawing them together as the unitary style of an integrated person' (Olkowski 1999:209).

Butler's articulation of re-iteration fails to take into account the differences in intensities, flows and connections that produce difference in its singularity. In her description, re-iteration is a process of sedimentation. Sedimentation produces strata or fixity. Her focus on the regulatory function of performativity tends to underplay its capacity to engender transformation. In Deleuze's conception, re-iteration and repetition can be viewed both as a regulatory movement towards molarisation, and as a destratifying movement that inaugurates movement and transformation. In his account, there is necessarily and simultaneously, the operation of the double articulation between stratification and destratification. The dynamic relation between bodies-language inaugurates

this double movement. Deleuze applies Klossowski's term "flexion" to account for this productive relation between bodies and language.

Flexion

For Deleuze, flexion is that 'act of language which fabricates a body for the mind … language transcends itself as it reflects the body' (Deleuze 1990:25). In flexion, Deleuze proposes, there is a double transgression that occurs in both language and in flesh:

> If language *imitates* bodies, it is not through onomatopoeia, but through flexion. And if bodies imitate language, it is not through organs, but through flexion…. In flexion, according to Klossowski, there is a double transgression—of language by the flesh and of the flesh by language. (Deleuze 1990:286)

The body that writes and is simultaneously written suggests a mutual reflection between bodies and language. As a double transgression between bodies and language, flexion is a "monstrosity" which effects de-formation at the level of matter rather than form.

In Deleuze's ontology of change, monstrosity is where, 'the bottom rises to the surface, the grid is effaced, modelling is defeated, and form is destroyed' (Olkowski 1999:17). The grid to which Deleuze refers is the plane of organisation (the social formation and the world of the Saussurian sign). When the grid is effaced, the division between language and the body disappears. In Deleuzian terms, this is the molecular dimension of the double articulation between molar and molecular. Where molecular becomings are involved, the body comes to bear on language. Matter is at work at the molecular level.

In an article entitled, 'The "Cunning Lingua" of Desire: Bodies-language and Perverse Performativity' (1995), Carolyn Chisholm brings Deleuze's understanding of flexion to an analysis of Kathleen Mary Fallon's novel *Working Hot* (1989). She argues that in *Working Hot,* Fallon puts language to work to produce an erotically charged, efficacious languaging that performs rather than merely represents. This verbal play is inaugurated through a series of incantations between lovers:

> ya wannabit a the old mons venis hey
> abituvataste uv the old monso veneseo she's a nice
> drop hey wanme to go fa a bit uv a tit a tit wiv ya

> clit hey a bit atheoldbluetongue between the
> leggings lass want a bituv a tonguing where it counts
> do ya sheila
> aw playin possum are we. (Fallon 1989:84-5)

In this linguistic performativity, Chisholm suggests that Fallon uses language to enact a double transgression in which language exceeds itself as it reflects the body. In this "monstrous" setting-in-motion of language, language transcends its structure as representation.

Chisholm's discussion of *Working Hot* begins with Eve Sedgwick's position on lingual performativity. In Sedgwick's version of performativity, her indebtedness to Butler is evident:

> Certain utterances (performatives), do not merely describe, but actually perform the actions they name … language can really be said to produce effects of identity, enforcement, seduction, challenge. (Sedgwick quoted in Chisholm 1995:22)

Chisholm finds Sedgewick's definition limited to the effects of discourse. Like Julia Kristeva and Deleuze, Chisholm is concerned with the somatic dimension of language.[1] In order to move beyond the limits of discourse and representation, Chisholm extends the definition of lingual performativity to include the mutual reflection of bodies and language. In conceiving of performativity as the mutual reflection of bodies and language, Chisholm suggests that Fallon's lingual performativity is carnal. According to Chisholm, Fallon is a 'cunning lingamist' who employs lingual performativity to effect erotic action. She terms this lingual performativity 'cunning lingua'. For Chisholm, cunning lingua is a register of language which has the force of action:

> Cunning lingua is not so much a signifier or signifying system, which stands in as a linguistic (or discursive representative)…. Cunning lingua is not representative of anything; rather it is an efficient and efficacious simulacrum, neither an abstract symbol nor a real organ, but a word-thing-act, a prosthesis composed of verbal matter, capable of forming, touching and arousing Fallon's interlocutors. (Chisholm 1995:24)

Cunning lingua does not only operate in the discursive domain, that is, the regime of knowledge-power. It also operates through a register where there is

a mutual reflection between bodies and language. In taking a somatic turn, Chisholm challenges Butler's notion of discursive performativity. She conceives Fallon's cunning lingua in terms of Deleuze's conception of performativity and flexion.

The world of Fallon's *Working Hot* is an intense world inhabited by forces, flows, intensities and velocity. It is a passional domain, where according to Guattari, 'polysemic, animistic, and transindividual subjectivity can be found equally in the worlds of infancy, madness, amorous passion and artistic creativity (Guattari 1995:101). It is a space where words no longer merely signify but also possess a force that enables movement and transformation. Fallon writes:

> I was only a force last night you know I lost my
> body my sex my humanness the heart knew nothing
> of the onslaught—just a force—gravity momentum
> whatnot I was malevolent and ecstatic. (Fallon 1989:84)

Lingual performativity bursts its own limits and exceeds Butler's notion of linguistic performativity. Working with Deleuze's notion of flexion, Chisholm proposes that Fallon engages in a word-thing-act, in which 'language exceeds its own structures in a radical performativity' (Chisholm 1995:25-26). The performative undoes the sign. Olkowski suggests that:

> The performative is the motion that inaugurates … variations in language, for the performative is both language and body; it is simultaneously corporeal insofar as it actualizes something in bodies, it involves the actions and passions of bodies; it is doing by saying. (Olkowski, 1999:229)

This *is* "working hot".

Deleuze argues that, in the disequilibrium that is produced through the radical performativity of flexion, the system birfucates and 'language itself can be seen to vibrate and stutter' (Deleuze 1994b:24). 'Stuttering' is a term Deleuze uses to describe the situation where:

> The stutter no longer affects pre-existing words, but, rather itself ushers in the words that it affects; in this case, the words do not exist independently of the stutter, which selects and links them together. It is no longer the individual who stutters in his speech, it is the writer

> who *stutters in the language system* (*langue*): he causes language as such to stutter. (Deleuze 1994b:23)

When Deleuze talks of stuttering as the limit of language he evokes an outside, not as something external to language, but rather as the possibility of an *outside of* language. The vibration and stuttering of the language occur in the interaction of the matter of a body with the language system. This different valency shifts the notion of performativity from one in which the body is *inscribed* by language to one where the body *becomes* language. In this reconceptualisation, the sign is pulverised by the rhythms and pulsions of the body. Deleuze suggests that:

> Just as the new language is not external to the language system, the asyntactic limit is not external to language, not outside of it. It is not a painting or a piece of music, but a music of words, a painting with words, a silence within words, as if the words were not disgorging their content—a grandiose vision or a sublime audition. The words paint and sing but only at the limit of the path they trace through their division and combination. (Deleuze 1994b:28)

Deleuze frequently uses visual and musical metaphors in his elaboration of the literary arts. In his view, writers paint with words whilst the words themselves paint and sing (Deleuze 1994b:28). However, Deleuze's understanding is not exclusively metaphoric. He argues, that in literature, linguistic performativity involves setting language in motion so that it comes to perform rather than merely describe.

A Stranger in Language

In his writing on creativity, Deleuze is particularly concerned with how the writer achieves this transfiguration in language. His elaboration relates to what Chisholm has described as the 'linguistic performativity of the artist' (Chisholm 1995:25). Where the writing becomes a force, it effects transformation at the level of matter. According to Deleuze, such a movement is molecular. Where language begins to stutter, notes Deleuze, the writer becomes:

> A foreigner in his own language: he does not mix another language with his, he shapes and sculpts a foreign language that does not preexist *within* his own language…. The point is to make language itself cry, to make it stutter, mumble or even whisper. (Deleuze 1994b:25)

So what is happening to make language stutter? Barrett (1996) argues that to make language stutter, the writer creates a disjunction between the sound system and the semantic system, so that the sound cuts across and deforms meaning. In performing this disjunction, the writer ruptures meaning, heightening arbitrariness and creating a vertiginous flight. Olkowski proposes that this rupture occurs where language:

> Participates in a relay between forms of expression (the pure event that inheres or subsists in the proposition) and the actions and passions of bodies in concrete social formations. That is, language (expression/enunciation) intervenes in circumstances and those circumstances of life are reflected again in language. (Olkowski 1999:226)

This may be related to Kristeva's account of the relation between the semiotic and the symbolic in language. Barrett draws on Kristeva's elaboration of the semiotic or somatic functions of language in suggesting that they 'constitute an excess that cannot be contained by the signifier' (Barrett 1996:156).

How might we grasp this transfiguration in the work of visual art? Cézanne's attempts to realise his "little sensations" exemplifies the state of affairs where the artist becomes a foreigner in her/his own language. Merleau-Ponty asserts that Cézanne wanted to see as a newborn in order to paint perception itself. In his efforts to do this, Cézanne put himself in the position of being a foreigner in the language of paint. Merleau-Ponty suggests that, in abandoning himself to the 'chaos of sensation', Cézanne continually re-invented the language of painting (Merleau-Ponty 1993:63). He was always working as a stranger in the language of paint and his efforts produced those little sensations as a material presence. Cézanne's working method was paradoxical. Merleau-Ponty observes that:

> He was pursuing reality without giving up the sensuous surface, with no other guide than the immediate impression of nature, without following the contours, with no outline to enclose the colour, with no perspectival or pictorial arrangement. This is what Bernard called Cézanne's suicide: aiming for reality while denying himself the means to attain it. (Merleau-Ponty 1993:63)

I would suggest that where Cézanne realises his little sensations in painting, he achieves a visual stutter. The painting begins to heave and tremble. Such a forceful tremble puts meaning into crisis.

It is not just the visual performativity of the artist that has the capacity to make the visual language stutter. According to Andrew Benjamin, matter in itself achieves this disruption of visual narrative. In his article, 'Matter's Insistence: Tony Scherman's *Banquo's Funeral*' (1996), Benjamin examines how technique and the materiality of the paint, work to undercut the narrative claims in the series *Banquo's Funeral*. He argues that the materiality of the medium provides an insistent force within the images. Here, Benjamin distinguishes between paint's presence and the materiality of paint. According to Benjamin, paint's presence constitutes the way the content is ordered and presented and, as such, it is inextricably linked to the meanings we derive from a work (Benjamin 1996:47). Materiality, on the other hand, is 'the insistence of the medium within the operation of the work's meaning' (Benjamin 1996:47). Benjamin argues that it is the operation of matter that causes the disruption of the traditional categories of interpretation. Materiality produces the visual stutter which disrupts visual language and visual narrative. He suggests that paint works by staging an appearance. In staging an appearance, matter insists.

Benjamin's elaboration of the forceful effects of matter in the work of painting, returns us to Heidegger's insistence that matter (*hyle*) is *co-responsible* for the work of art. In arguing for a productive materiality in the work of art, I would contend that it is in the interaction between the matter of bodies, objects and the materiality of the paint that a visual stutter is effected. Accordingly, matter's insistence does not only include the materiality of the medium, but also includes the matter of the artist in a graphic performativity and the matter of the thing itself. The 'becoming present' that Benjamin identifies involves a co-emergence or a *methektic* performativity. It suggests a material ontology of the work of art.

Towards a Productive Material Account of the Work of Art

I asked Anne-Marie Smith if she would sit for a portrait. At first she had some reservations:

> My first reaction was I thought that at the time I was being asked out of politeness, that nobody would want to do a portrait of me, so I should refuse politely. And then when I was asked again and then I realised there was some real interest there, I felt a bit scared. I was a bit nervous, quite nervous about being pinned down in one place; in one spot and somebody actually getting hold of me. I was giving some of myself away. (Anne-Marie Smith in interview with Barrett, February 1990)

Anne-Marie's reaction to having her portrait painted raises questions about the relationship between an artwork and its referent. For Anne-Marie, the act of sitting for a portrait involved a risk. The danger of being captured in paint evoked the fear of actual capture or loss. The belief that some trace of her could be taken and transferred into the portrait, that she would somehow *be* in the portrait, suggests that for Anne-Marie an image does not just stand in for, or represent her. The portrait comes to embody her being in some way. For Anne-Marie, a portrait is perceived as an act in which representation has the potential to transcend its structure as representation. Where representation transcends its own structure, claims Deleuze, it 'enacts the "mutual reflection" of body and language' (Deleuze quoted in Chisholm 1995:25). In this transcendence, representation disappears. If this is the case, and it *is* in many cultural contexts, the portrait is not just a representation of a person, or an object for humans as *subiectum*. It actually *becomes* the person in some peculiar way. As Lucien Freud observed to Laurence Gowing, 'I would wish my portraits to be *of* people, not *like* them. Not having the look of the sitter, being them' (Freud quoted in Gayford 1993:22).

Anne-Marie's fear and Lucien Freud's provocation, question the fundamental premise that pre-determines contemporary understandings of the image as representation. In Chapter One, I raised the idea that according to a representationalist mode of understanding, the world is reduced to a schema or model. In this schema, as in an enframing mode of revealing, everything is reduced to the status of an object for a *subiectum*. In Chapter Three, I demonstrated further, that where the form-matter structure is coupled with the subject-object relation, representation possesses the conceptual machinery that is hard to escape. Where this mode of thinking dominates our understanding of Being, it threatens to drive out all other possibilities. In this context, is it possible to take the statements of Lucien Freud and Anne-Marie Smith as more than mere figures of speech? Whilst the claim, that there can be a mutual reflection between imaging and reality in Indigenous Australian ritual practices, is beginning to gain some currency in academic discourse, the suggestion that this understanding has consequences for western cultural practices is less comfortable. How does western culture respond to the challenge that an image just might transcend its own structure as representation?

Transcendence or transfiguration raises questions concerning the power of the image. In the European world, it was initially through religious debates concerning the power of ritual objects and images, that such questions were addressed.[2] The debate that has shaped contemporary western understandings of the power of the image crystallised around the Catholic and Protestant

understandings of the meaning of the sacrament. The Catholic understanding of the sacrament was grounded in the notion of transubstantiation, that is, a belief in the transformative power of the image. Protestant liturgy, on the other hand, stresses the symbolic role of the sacrament. For Catholics, consecration of the wine and bread enacts a transformation of the wine into the blood of Christ and bread into the body of Christ. In the Protestant church, on the other hand, there is no transformation. According to Protestant liturgical practice, the consecrated wine stands in for the blood and the consecrated bread stands in for the body. Wine and bread are ascribed symbolic value only.

The divergence in thought between Luther and Calvin is critical in elaborating this fundamental distinction. Luther believed that the word was powerful enough to transform the element into the sacrament. His belief in the transformative power of the sacrament was in keeping with the Catholic tradition of transubstantiation. Calvin, on the other hand, denied any possibility that there could be transformation between matter and spirit. Hans Belting argues that, for Calvin, 'the separation between God and the world, between spirit and matter, was irreversible, and the spirit was impervious to all sensuous or personal experience' (Belting 1994:466). Here we can contrast Calvin's view with a Pythagorean *methektic* understanding. In Calvin's thinking, there is no permeability in the passage between the divine and the human, or any possibility that this passage could be traversed. There could never be a *methektic* or productive performance of ritual. Belting notes, that Calvin preached 'the bread was only a sign, which, like all signs, can never actually become what it merely signifies. The Body of Christ is thus only a "figure of speech"' (Belting 1994:466).

During the Reformation, the Catholic understanding of the power of images, exemplified in the notion of transubstantiation, was dislodged by the mode of thought that posited images as substitutes or signs that stood in for objects. In view of this paradigm shift, the image came to be conceived of as a sign. It no longer had the power of transcendence, but came to stand as a substitute or representation of its object. In this historical shift, representation has become conflated with the sign. Viewed as a sign, a representation can only stand in for or represent an object for humans as *subiectum*. Given this conflation, I would like to return to representationalism and reconsider the "conceptual machinery" that this view of representation has at its command. If we add the sign-function to the form-matter structure and the subject-object relation, we can begin to understand why representationalism is so very hard to dislodge as *the* mode of thinking Being. In Chapter Three, I suggested that, when conceived as a sign, art was revealed in its equipmental-being as

equipment for communicating. I also suggested that where the equipmental being of the work of art dominated, it threatened to drive out all other possibilities of Being. In the "sign-being" of the image, it can be argued, that the possibility of a transformative-being of the image has been elided. In place of the transformational power of the image, we have come to understand the image as a vehicle through which social meanings and significations circulate. Its function is primarily informational and communicative.

In this focus on the equipmental or sign-being of an image, it is assumed that the visual is first and foremost a language that can be decoded in the same way as verbal and written language. James Elkins suggests that, according to this view, visual representation is conceived of as a sign or complex of signs that conveys social meaning. This conflation between the visual and the textual has produced a specifically visual semiotics parallel to the linguistic model (Elkins 1998:9). This conception of the visual image as a sign system or a visual language has resulted in the application of the tools of semiotic analysis to both visual images and written texts equally. Visual images become discursive productions or "texts" which can be decoded or "read", to reveal their social meanings. Such an approach to visual images has enabled us to map how art comes to mean in a social context. Of critical importance is the way in which such a methodology has enabled a mapping of the way power works through discourse. In this way, the work of art has been freed from its dimension as the expression of an artist's genius, and placed firmly within the realm of the social. The visual image, like a verbal text, becomes a play of signs.

Foucault demonstrates how sign-work moves us on from those aestheticist theories of art that valorise the "artist as genius". Image making, like writing has:

> Freed itself from the dimension of expression. Referring only to itself, but without being restricted to the confines of its interiority, writing is identified with its own unfolded exteriority. This means that it is an interplay of signs arranged less according to its signified content than according to the very nature of the signifier. Writing unfolds like a game *(jeu)* that invariably goes beyond its own rules and transgresses its limits. In writing, the point is not to manifest or exalt the act of writing. (Foucault 1984:102)

Underpinning this interpretation of writing as play of the signifier, is de Saussure's linguistically based model of semiotics. In focusing on the signifier and its play, Saussurian semiotics brackets out the object of representation (the

referent) and ignores the material production of the work. Foucault's (1983) "reading" of René Magritte's image, *The Treason of Images* (1928-9), in his book *This is Not a Pipe*, shows how the interplay of signs unfolds like a game. In a playful linguistic game, Foucault demonstrates the play of signifiers and the subsequent bracketing out of the referent. "This" is not a pipe. A picture of a pipe is not a pipe, nor does the combination of the letters p-i-p-e make a pipe. Foucault's reading teases out the conundrum produced in the interaction between image, text and reality. He argues that the representing (the sign) is quite separate from the object of representation (its referent) and this representation takes on a life of its own in the play of the signifier. *Ceçi N'est pas une Pipe* is not a pipe.

The game that Foucault plays with Magritte's painting *The Treason of Images*, exemplifies the textual/linguistic turn in contemporary visual research. According to James Elkins, the semiotic analysis of images, depends on 'suppressing the semiotic nature of marks in order to proceed with readings that hinge on narrative' (Elkins 1998:4). However, he asserts that, pictures are different from texts. Elkins argues that 'what is at stake here is nothing less than the pictorial nature of pictures' (Elkins 1998:13). Thus he claims that what needs to be recognised is that graphic marks 'are simultaneously signs and not signs' (Elkins 1998:45). Tony Bond is in agreement with Elkins's provocation. He asserts that while 'semiotic analysis may have provided us with the tools for unpicking the social "text" embedded in the image, it is seldom sensitive to the sensory effect of materials that engage bodily memory' (Bond 1998:1). Equally, literary criticism does not bring us closer to the poetry or sound sense of writing, for as we remember the equipmental-being of a work does not bring us any closer to the work-being of the work.

Materialising Practices

How can we engage the sensory effect of materials that activate bodily memory if we become so caught up in the play of signifiers? How can we address Anne-Marie Smith's concern that a painting might contain some of her being in its very fabric? What if there were a dynamic relationship between the object and its image, instead of merely a relationship of substitution and play? Bryson urges art historians to develop a theorisation that conceives of form in dynamic terms:

> As matter in process, in the sense of the original, pre-Socratic word for form: *rhuthmos*, rhythm, the impress on matter of the body's internal energy, in the mobility and vibrancy of its somatic rhythms; the body of labour, of material practice. (Bryson, 1983:131)

What is required to enable such a theorisation? How can we conceive of a dynamic relation between a conception of form that is concerned with the mobility and vibrancy of somatic forms and matter in process? If, as Elkins argues, graphic marks can be 'understood as objects that are simultaneously signs and not signs' (Elkins 1998:45), then what is the character of such marks?

In order to address this challenge, I wish to return to Oscar Wilde's novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. In the narrative, Dorian Gray, a young man of great beauty, is asked to sit for a portrait by the artist Basil Hallward. As the story unfolds, a transformation occurs whereby the representation transcends its own structure as representation and takes on the life of its subject. While the character Dorian Gray retains his youth, the painted image of Dorian begins to age and distort. There is a transmutation between the materiality of the body of the sitter and the materiality of the painting.

The transformation is ushered in by Dorian's verbal wish that he would remain beautiful while the painting grew old:

> How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. It will never be older than this particular day of June…. If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture was to grow old! For that—for that—I would give everything! Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul for that. (Wilde 1980:34)

Dorian could not envisage that his words could effect or perform his utterance. Yet as the image undergoes a transformation, Dorian's rational belief in the separation between the representation and reality is undone:

> Surely his wish had not been fulfilled? Such things were impossible. It seemed monstrous even to think of them. And, yet, there was the picture before him, with the touch of cruelty in the mouth. (Wilde 1980:34)

Whilst his own face remained flawless and beautiful, the face on the canvas became scarred with the events and travesties of Dorian's life. In this narrative, Dorian's speech act proved to be performative. It set something on its way into arrival.

My argument here can be easily dismissed as mere illustration. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is just a novel and its story is no more than a fable with a moral on

vanity and class privilege. However, in light of my previous discussions of performativity, perhaps the relationship between real bodies and imaging is more powerful than customarily believed. Does the speech act have the power to bring into being that which it names? Can the image take up this challenge and transcend its structure as representation? Austin's work on speech act theory suggests that the performative does possess this potency. As we have seen, the performative speech act does have the ability to enact or produce that which it names.

Is it possible to make the same claim for visual imaging? Is visual imaging performative in this sense? Can it enact or produce that which it images? Georges Bataille has argued that the 'function of representation commits the very life of those who take it on' (Bataille quoted in Wilson 1996:23). In Wilde's narrative, Dorian Gray's fate becomes inextricably tied to his portrait, to the image of him. If the function of representation does commit the very life of those who take it on, then perhaps visual representation takes on a very different value from what is currently believed in contemporary art theory and history.

The suggestion that the material practice of art has real material effects and there could possibly be a mutual exchange between the matter of bodies and the image of bodies, has limited currency in western art history and theory. To argue such a position is to cast into doubt the identity of the sign and the generally held view that there is a gap between the sign and its referent. It questions the assumption that representation is always (and only) mediated. Instead we are presented with the possibility that the image may actually be in a dynamic relation with matter. According to such a thesis, it could be argued that the image is not a substitute, a sign of or for something other than itself; rather the act of imaging has the power to materialise the facts of matter. Thought this way, image making could be posited as a productive materiality or a *methektic* performativity.

The Matter of Fact

Refiguring the relationship between the image and the referent raises questions about the production of an image. If there is a dynamic relationship between the referent and the representation, what is the relationship between the maker and the work? How do we apprehend the space of interplay between the artist, the referent, materials and the image? How do we theorise this relationship without reducing it to the circulation of signs or reverting to expressionist notions of art?

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the artist Basil Hallward comments that, in making the painting, he had betrayed too much of himself, given too much away. He muses:

> Whether it was the Realism of the method, or the mere wonder of your own personality, thus directly presented to me without mist or veil, I cannot tell. But I know that as I worked at it, every flake and film of colour seemed to me to reveal my secret. I grew afraid that others would know of my idolatry. I felt, Dorian, that I had told too much, that I had put too much of myself in it. (Wilde 1980:94)

In this statement a number of possible interpretations can be put forward. We could interpret Hallward's statement within the framework of Realism. As a method of working Realism still retains a certain privilege as a mode of imaging that produces a "true" re-presentation of reality. As a true representation of reality, Hallward's painting may have revealed an instance of truth. Secondly, we could bring Expressionist interpretations to bear upon his statement. According to Expressionist theories of art, Hallward may be figured as expressing his own personality or his "inner essence" on the canvas.

However, neither the Realist nor the Expressionist interpretations of art sit comfortably with contemporary theories that embrace semiotics and social constructionism. According to the latter, there is no "original" to be copied, nor is there any "inner essence" to be expressed. From the position of discursive theories of art, both Realism and Expressionism are seen to produce "reality effects" rather than having any substance in fact. A reality effect, according to Judith Butler, serves to produce the effects of its own reality (Butler 1991:21). Thus Realism is the effect of discourses of Realism and Expressionism the effect of discourses of Expressionism. Neither have any substance in fact. According to such a critique, Basil Hallward misrecognises reality effect for reality.

However, there may be another way to conceive the revelation that occurs at the level of the flake and film of colour. The directness of the face-to-face contact between Dorian Gray and Basil Hallward, without mist or veil, suggests an encounter that exceeds the effects of discourse. The revelation that occurs at the level of 'the flake and film of colour' gives an indication that Hallward had insinuated himself materially as a trace in the painting. It suggests a material exchange or transmutation that short circuits or transcends the social. The exchange occurs at the level of what Barthes terms *prima materia*, that is, 'what exists prior to the division operated by meaning' (Barthes 1988:166).

In his article 'Representation', W.J.T. Mitchell argues that according to the expressive aesthetic, 'the aesthetic object does not "represent" something, except incidentally; it "is" something, an object with an indwelling spirit, a trace in matter of the activity of the immaterial' (Mitchell 1995:16). I am convinced by the suggestion that the aesthetic object is something, as well as representing something. In Mitchell this "is-ness" is a trace of the activity of the immaterial *on* matter. Like Mitchell, Bryson is also interested in the dynamic relationship between form and matter. However, in his explication of this dynamism, he makes it clear that, in this relationship, matter is not eloquent. It is the 'impress *on* matter of the body's internal energy, in the mobility and vibrancy of its somatic rhythms', that constitutes the body of labour in material practice (Bryson 1983:131). For Bryson the material practice of painting derives from the dynamism of human labour (Bryson 1983:137). Thus painters are:

> Agents operating through labour on the materiality of the visual sign; what must be recognised is that crucial term labour, work of the body on matter, transformation of matter through work.(Bryson 1983:150)

My understanding of the "is-ness" of the work of art, contrasts somewhat with Mitchell and Bryson's conceptions. In both Bryson's and Mitchell's interpretations, I worry that matter is not eloquent. In their figurations matter remains mute, a surface to be inscribed by human energy. Rather than this "is-ness" being a trace in matter or an impress on matter, I want to suggest that this involves a scripturing resulting from the activity of matter itself. Instead of form being imposed on matter, matter becomes a scribe. Here matter becomes language.

As I have already noted, Benjamin gestures to the insistent activity of matter in his article 'Matter's Insistence'. In his distinction between paint's presence and the materiality of paint, Benjamin provides us with the means to be able to differentiate between materialisation at the level of social meaning and the materialisation of matter. In identifying paint's presence as the way content is ordered and presented, Benjamin refers to the paradigmatic selection and the syntagmatic organisation of elements in a painting. The way that visual elements are selected and organized enables us to read social meaning in the work of art. Materiality, on the other hand, is the operation of the energy of matter in a work. For Benjamin, it is 'the insistence of the medium within the operation of the work's meaning' (Benjamin 1996:47). In this distinction, he makes it clear that matter is eloquent. Just as the mobility and vibrancy of the human body's somatic rhythms are evident in the artwork, so too is matter's insistence felt. Thus, the "is-ness" that Mitchell refers to, is not a trace *in*

matter or an impress *on* matter'. It is a trace of the activity of matter itself, both human and non-human. Here, I want to return the Deleuze's notion of performativity and argue that in process, the body becomes language rather than merely inscribed by language.

In an article 'The Wisdom of Art' (1988), Roland Barthes supports such a fecund performativity. He observes that in the alchemical mix that constitutes the work of art, 'the materials exist as matter; even if some meaning comes out of the painting' (Barthes 1988:167). Thus, he continues; 'pencil and colour remain as "things", as stubborn substances whose obstinacy in "being there" nothing … can destroy' (Barthes 1998:167). He exemplifies the power of "being there" or the "is-ness" of this "fact" in relation to Cy Twombly's work:

> Before everything else, there happens … some pencil strokes, oils, paper, canvas. It is a fact. Twombly imposes his materials on us not as something that is going to serve some purpose, but as absolute matter, manifested in its glory … the materials are *materia prima*, as for the Alchemist. (Barthes 1988:167)

Such observations concerning the insistence of matter may provide a clue to Elkins's assertion that pictorial images are simultaneously signs and not signs. The degree to which an image is a sign marks its place in the discursive order of things. However, I have proposed that images cannot be contained within the discursive frame. The "not-sign" materiality of the image deforms the sign. Materiality is matter's insistence.

A Monstrous Performativity

In western philosophy and western art, as I have argued, it is very difficult to think outside the paradigm in which representation is conceived as a gap, an absence or, as Kirby says, a 'not here' or 'not now'. How can we envisage representation as an act of concurrent actual production? To think through the 'indissolubility of materiality and signification' is, as Butler has observed, no easy matter (Butler 1993:31).

However, this difficulty is not universal. We have examined how, in Indigenous Australian culture, no such gap exists. For Indigenous Australians, ritual activities produce reality. Thus increase or fertility rituals involve a productive materiality. The performance of fertility rites is not representational, but productive. In rhyming the rhythms of the landscape and the body, meaning and reality are constituted in the performance. If, in a *methektic* performativity,

there is no gap to be crossed or absence to be filled, then perhaps Kirby is right when she asserts that matter is more articulated than imagined (Kirby 1997:14).

Kirby develops her thesis on the articulateness of matter in *Telling Flesh: The Substance of the Corporeal* (1997). In a chapter entitled 'Corpus Delicti: The Body as the Scene of Writing', Kirby argues that the Saussurian elaboration of the sign represses matter. She proposes that we need to return to the matter and insists that there is an intertwining of substance and representation. She claims that the body 'is unstable – a shifting scene of inscription that both writes and is written' (Kirby 1997:61). Her discussion of dermagraphism—the autographic capacity of the skin—demonstrates a "monstrous" performativity; an intertext that implicates the body in the sign. This discussion demonstrates the effect of energetic matter.

In her analysis of Charcot's experiments with hysterics in the Salpêtrière in the late nineteenth century, Kirby demonstrates that the stuff of matter is not mute, but is transformative and transformed. Charcot's medical experiments involved hypnosis. In these experiments, verbal directions to "hysterical patients" inaugurated a series of corporeal transformations. She cites an eyewitness account by Barthélémy who describes how the patients came to perform Charcot's instructions corporeally. Barthélémy observed that in front of a medical audience:

> A patient is hypnotized: the doctor writes his own name on the patient's forearms with a rubber stylet and issues the following suggestion: "This evening, at 4 pm, after falling asleep, you will bleed from the lines that I have drawn on your arms". At the appointed time, the patient obliges. The characters appear in bright relief on his skin, and droplets of blood rise in several spots. (Didi-Huberman quoted in Kirby 1997:57)

Kirby suggests that dermagraphism demonstrates a capacity of the body to 'sign itself' (Kirby 1997:59) and not just be written upon. In this radical performativity, the word literally becomes flesh. 'Ideality and materiality are enmeshed and empowered … [in] what Derrida might call an inscriptive efficacy, a "writing together of traces"' (Kirby 1997:55).

The implication of Kirby's analysis is profound. It suggests that the body simultaneously writes and is written in a transformative and material productivity. Kirby affirms this when she comments that the 'image could be said to rewrite the image-maker in a movement of production' (Kirby 1997:61). This claim—that an image could be said to rewrite the image-maker—returns us to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. For Dorian, it was monstrous to think that his wish

could be fulfilled, 'yet, there was the picture before him, with the touch of cruelty in the mouth' (Wilde 1980:34). The monstrousness that Dorian encounters bears out Kirby's claim that the monstrous elasticity of the body, demonstrated by demographism, 'includes the tissue of the body in the sensible textile of an "arche-writing"' (Kirby 1997:56).

These observations bring into doubt the separation of sign and referent and pose continuity between the work of art and the artwork. If there is continuity, then perhaps it is possible to argue that an image can exceed its structure as representation in a radical material performativity where it performs rather than stands for its object? In the performativity of flexion, the body writes and is simultaneously written. Here, as we have seen, the notion of performativity shifts from one in which the body is inscribed by language, to one where the body becomes language. This proposition raises two final questions: What might a radical material performativity actually look like in the making of work? What consequences might such a process produce?

The Shape of a Materialist Ontology of the Work of Art

In a materialist ontology of the work of art, materialisation is not just enacted discursively. More radically, through material and somatic processes, materialisation implicates the life of matter. Whilst for Butler, language and materiality are embedded in each other, are 'chiasmic in their interdependency' (Butler 1993:69), representation is necessarily a 'language effect'. In her linguistic turn, materiality is disempowered and robbed of its insistence. Representation is reduced to the (Saussurian) sign, the play of signifiers. However, we must also remember Elkins's view that graphic marks need to be 'understood as objects that are simultaneously signs and not signs' (Elkins 1998:45). Where the pictorial nature of pictures is at stake, visual images exceed the sign as it is commonly understood. Pictures *mean*, but also they *are*; they are both signs and a materialisation of matter.

How do we experience a work as both an act of concurrent actual production and a sign? Charles Sanders Peirce's concept of semiosis provides me with the conceptual tools to think through this question. Through his elaboration of the "dynamic object", Peirce shows how, through process, the outer world enters into semiosis. Together with his account of the causal relationship between a sign and its referent in the indexical sign, Peirce's theorisation enables me to develop and shape a materialist ontology of the work of art.

The Dynamic Object and Matters of Fact

Previously I have demonstrated the limits of Saussurian semiotics for a materialist ontology. In primarily being concerned with the play of the signifier, Saussurian semiotics omits the process of making—both how signs are made and the relation between signs and a referent. Theresa de Lauretis attests to this inadequacy when she argues that:

> The arbitrary nature of the linguistic sign caused semiology to extend the categorical distinction between language … and reality to all forms and processes of representation, and thus to posit an essential discontinuity between the orders of the symbolic and the real. (de Lauretis 1987:39)

In the application of semiology to visual representations, the discontinuity between the symbolic and the real has been carried over. John Fiske argues that the key term missing in this translation is 'effect' (Fiske 1990:51). C.S Peirce's semiology, with its elaboration of the dynamical object and the indexical sign, addresses the Saussurian omission of effect.

Like Saussure, Peirce agreed on the centrality of the sign. However whilst Saussure's roots in linguistics led him to focus on the relationship between the signifier and the signified, Peirce is interested in the relationship between signification and the material world. This concern is explored through an examination of the connection between a sign and its referent. Firstly, he is interested in the way the outer world enters semiosis. Secondly, he is concerned with the dynamical relationship between sign and referent. James Elkins's claim that graphic marks can be understood as 'simultaneously signs and not signs' (Elkins 1998:45) becomes more explicable in the light of Peirce's elaboration of semiosis. For Peirce, as de Lauretis observes, the outer world 'enters into semiosis at both ends of the signifying process: first through the object, more specifically the "dynamic object," and second through the final interpretant' (de Lauretis 1987:39). What contribution does the idea of the dynamic object make to the task of developing a materialist ontology of the work of art?

Peirce differentiates between the dynamic object and the immediate object. Operating in the realm of ideas, the immediate object is the object as represented or denoted. The dynamic object, on the other hand is external to the sign. Umberto Eco, writing on Pierce, elaborates this distinction in the following way:

> Signs have a direct connection with Dynamic Objects only insofar as objects determine the formation of a sign; on the other hand, signs only

> "know" Immediate Objects, that is meanings. There is a difference between *the object of which a sign is a sign* and the *object of a sign*: the former is the Dynamic Object, a state of the outer world; the latter is a semiotic construction. (Eco 1979:193)

Defined this way, Peirce's immediate object operates within the sphere of social meanings. The dynamic object, on the other hand, defies such discursive structures.

The assertion that the dynamic object is a state of the outer world seems at odds with its determining quality; that is, with its capacity to effect the formation of the sign in some way. However this is not the case. Peirce argues that the dynamic object is an insistent force which puts pressure on, and deforms the sign. In an account of Peirce's dynamic object, Anne Freadman notes that its dynamic energy or force has the capacity to surprise:

> Surprise is the counter to predictability, the always already known, the only thing with the power to change our minds/signs/theories, the as-yet-unsaid impinging on the talked-over, the site of discontinuity and the place for questions. (Freadman 1986:101)

In visual terms, this is the as-yet-unseen (in Elkins's terms, the unpresentable, the unpicturable, the inconceivable and the unseeable), impinging on the seen and represented. Here, we again witness reference to the field of forces that operate on bodies. The dynamic object operates as a pressure on, or pulse in, the see-able.[3] The insistence of the dynamic object, constitutes a key energy or force in the work of art. Thus, a picture is not just the coded, immediate object. A picture also bears the pressure of the dynamical object. In this way, the dynamic object prevents the picture from being reduced to just a sign.

Peirce's theory of semioisis and transformation is predicated on this pressure from outside the immediate object. In his view, we live in two worlds, 'a world of fact and a world of fancy … we call the world of fancy the internal world, the world of fact the external world' (Peirce 1931:160). Were it not for the 'garment of contentment and habituation', Peirce continues:

> A person would find his internal world rudely disturbed and his fiats set at naught by brutal inroads of ideas from without. I call such forcible modification of our ways of thinking the influence of the world of fact or *experience* (Peirce 1931:160).

Peirce's "fact" is to be understood in a very specific way. Like Heidegger's "fact", Peirce's use of the term fact bears no relation to logic or rationality. Where Heidegger's understanding of fact relates to throwness (*Geworfenheit*), Peirce's fact also pertains to our being-in-the world. Although he refers to ideas from without, his "fact" is not the fact of conceptual thought, nor is it a sign. "Fact" is the effect of the dynamic object insinuating itself into our being and consequently into our performative presentations, showings and manifestations. Thus, in our imaging the dynamic object insists that its presence is felt. Its pressure and vibrations erupt as the work of art. Fact is the pressure of matter as sensation.

We have come across this the link between "fact" and "sensation" before in reference to Francis Bacon's paintings.[4] In the Sylvester interview, Bacon refers to the 'brutality of fact'. For him, the brutality of fact is 'where painting is returning fact onto the nervous system in a more violent way' (Sylvester 1988:59). Similarly, in 'The Wisdom of Art', Barthes evokes fact as *'materia prima*, as for the Alchemists. The *materia prima* is what exists prior to the division operated by meaning' (Bryson 1988:166). It is as matter that the dynamic object insists.

Francis Bacon's reference to the brutality of fact does not relate to violence in painting, but rather is concerned with the violence of paint. It is the way paint's materiality comes to affect us as beings. Bacon confirms this when he contends that this violence has nothing to do at all with the violence of war. Rather the violence of paint is 'inseparable from its direct action on the nervous system … it has nothing to do with the nature of the represented object' (Bacon in Deleuze 2003:25).

In her article, 'The Violence of Paint', Parveen Adams attempts to account for Bacon's notion of the brutality of fact in psychoanalytic terms. Whilst her concluding remarks support Bacon's claim that what is at stake is not violence but paint, Adams proposes that, in Bacon's paintings, the violence of fact is a consequence of the detachment of the gaze from vision (Adams 1993:58). She argues that in this detachment, the 'spectator's relation to the image is disturbed [and] the illusion of wholeness has been, as it were, castrated' (Adams 1993:55).

The disturbance that Adams details has correspondences with Peirce's claim that 'a person's internal world is rudely disturbed and his fiats set at naught by brutal inroads of ideas from without' (Peirce 1931:160). But can we attribute this brutality to notions of castration and lack? Castration assumes a cut or

loss. Adams's argument, like Butler's, is underpinned by psychoanalytic notions of desire as lack and detachment as loss. In this understanding, as we have seen:

> The referent persists only as a kind of absence or loss, that which language does not capture, but instead, that which impels language repeatedly to attempt that capture, that circumscription—and to fail. (Butler 1993:67)

Thus where Adams poses synaesthetic mobility as being attributable to the detachment of the gaze, I am more inclined to pose this synaesthetic mobility as a consequence of the proliferation engendered by the pressure of facts. Here, I return to Chisholm's productive word-thing-act, where fact involves the abandonment of the 'specular arena of the split subject for the aural [visual/tactile/oral] medium of bodies-language' (Chisholm 1995:36). Like Chisholm, I would abandon the castrated and castrating "eye/I" for the plenitude of fact.

Bacon alludes to this when he argues that the task of an artist is to 'set a trap by which you hope to trap this living fact alive' (Bacon in Sylvester 1988:57). Cézanne also subscribes to this in his proclamation that 'I have a hold of my motif' (Cézanne quoted in Merleau-Ponty 1993:67). For him, fact had to be 'caught alive in a net' (Merleau-Ponty 1993:67). While both artists betray a modern representationalist will to mastery, they believe that fact should live on in a painting. For Cézanne the fact materialized within him. 'The landscape thinks itself in me … and I am its consciousness' (Cézanne quoted in Merleau-Ponty 1993:67). Thus, rather than asserting his will to mastery, Cézanne abandoned himself to the chaos of sensation (Merleau-Ponty 1993:63).

Cézanne's method of working and his doubt about his ability to realise his little sensations, reveal something of the relationship between the dynamic object and the immediate object or the mental representation. The expectation of wholeness, that Adams claims is disturbed for the spectator in the detachment of the gaze from vision, is not necessarily the expectation of the maker. There is no unified field of vision for the artist who is immersed in facts. Instead, each moment of seeing and marking is a different moment, a different sensation and a different realisation of fact. Merleau-Ponty notes that in abandoning the treatise of his training to map the world anew, Cézanne pursued reality 'with no other guide than the immediate impression of nature, without contours, with no outline to enclose the colour, with no perspectival or pictorial arrangement' (Merleau-Ponty 1993:63). Cézanne's suicide was to

open him self continually to fact. In doing so, his internal world was continuously disturbed by the ideas from without. We are once again reminded of Heidegger's conception of createdness. In opening him self to fact, Cézanne became like a passageway. He was open to the creative process and in this openness he allowed the work-being of the work to emerge.

Merleau-Ponty's observation—that Cézanne pursued reality with no other guide than the immediate impression of nature—also takes us back to Deleuze's notion of faceicity (*visagéité*). We recall that, when painting operates through dispersion, it escapes the outline and forms part of an intensive series (Deleuze 1986:88-89). The intensive series of little sensations and colouring sensations in Cézanne's watercolours exemplifies the operation of faceicity. These little sensations produce intensity. Accordingly, they produce a 'point of departure in a passional line in the process of sweeping away to "realness"' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:187). Bois's description of Cézanne's touch supports this contention:

> Cézanne's touch was the bridge between his pigment and the substances, forms, and the spatiality of the world.… It was what allowed him to conceive his paintings as worlds under construction, similar—in their mode of existence for our perception—to nature itself.… To look at a Cézanne … is to see simultaneously its molecular surface and the depicted object in the act of germinating under our very eyes. (Bois 1998:39)

In Bois's reference to the depicted object there is a resonance with Peirce's immediate object. Simultaneously, we become aware of its molecular surface in the act of germinating under our very eyes. This molecularity or molecularisation is the felt pressure of the Peircian dynamic object.

Through Cézanne's paintings, we become aware that a picture is not separate from its production. A picture emerges simultaneously, as both a sign and not a sign. This dynamic relation figures material practice in terms of co-emergence rather than mastery. In a co-emergent practice, matter is not impressed upon, but rather matter enters into process in the dynamic interplay through which meaning and effects emerge. A picture emerges in and through the play of the matter of objects (the dynamic object), the matter of bodies, the materials of production and the matter of discourse. It is not just a play of signs.

Through reference to Peirce's elaboration of the dynamic object, I have argued that visual practice is an act of concurrent actual production which produces an image that is both a sign and a 'not sign'. Yet it remains to be seen how this productivity is materialised as a trace or index in the work itself. If the "fact" is alive, where is the evidence of this in a visual work? How can we map its effects?

Performative Indices

Peirce's categorisation of signs as iconic, symbolic and indexical opens the sign to an exteriority that allows for the effect of the dynamic object. In Peirce's trichotomy, the icon represents its object by virtue of likeness; the symbol represents objects by virtue of a rule or convention or code; and the index represents its object by virtue of being really affected by it (Greenlee 1973:70). In this system, it is the index, with its dynamical relation to its object that opens the sign to the dynamic object.

The dynamical quality of the indexical sign can be exemplified through attention to the use of complementary colours in a painting. In Gauguin's painting, *Self-portrait* (1889), for example, red daubs of paint come together iconically to represent an apple. In western culture, a red apple in a painting will also tend to be read symbolically. According to Christian symbolism, the red apple signifies temptation. Yet, there is also a third level at which the red apple engages corporeally with the viewer. This palpability has nothing to do with its iconic or symbolic value. It involves the indexical quality of the paint and the *effect* that this has on the viewer. The juxtaposition of the red and green in the painting creates a vibration that hits us bodily. Thus the optical effect of complementary colours is one example of the dynamism of the index.

Brigid Riley's optical paintings could also be seen in terms of the dynamism of the index. Here, as with the optical effect of complementary colours, the causal relation needs to be theorised in terms of sensation and the body. Deleuze confirms this when he argues that colour, as sensation, is an embodied phenomena. He comments that:

> Colour is in the body, sensation is in the body, and not in the air. Sensation is what is painted. 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. (Deleuze 2003:23)

Peirce's indexical sign, with its causal relation between the thing and its sign, points to a way of considering the matter of things—the matter of objects, of

the body in process and the matter of the work. The index does not produce meaning in the same way as the symbol.[5] The index has real material effects. It allows us to witness the force of materialisation. It is the actual modification of the sign by the object that gives the index its quality (Peirce 1955:102). This takes us beyond the sign to the facts of matter.

Whilst the indexical quality of cultural objects has been central to many non-western cultures, such interest has waxed and waned in western culture. In many non-western societies, the power of the index is never disputed (Taussig, 1993). In early Christian and medieval societies, there was also a belief in the effective force of the index. The veneration of the *Shroud of Turin* and other religious relics exemplifies the belief in the power of images. However, as I argued earlier in this Chapter, the conceptual machinery of representationalism has robbed the image of this potential. The belief in the power of images, and consequently the force of the index was dislodged by a mode of thought that posited images as substitutes or signs that stood in for their object.

Despite this shift in mode of thought, there has been a renewed interest in the indexical sign in twentieth century art. This revival has become evident in contemporary art's use of objects in, and as the work. Artists have come to replace "illusionism" with the "real thing". In particular, indexical elements provide the key to the being of collage, assemblage, performance art and environmental art. Cornelia Parker's installation, *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View* (1991), is an exemplary example of such uses of the index. However, this resurgence of interest tends to be accompanied by a very different belief structure from that which was evident in medieval society.

In 'A Paradigm Shift in Twentieth Century Art' (1998), Tony Bond argues that the twentieth century engagement with the index has produced a paradigm shift in contemporary art practice. He traces this engagement to two different impetuses. Firstly, he argues, that interest in the index was stimulated by an avant-garde reaction to the crisis in mimetic representation. As a result of this crisis, artists came to use real objects and elements instead of illusionism. Secondly there has been a renewed interest in medieval beliefs in the force of the index. In medieval religious art, as Bond observes, 'the medieval icon could function as a holy object with spiritual power over and above its pictorial/iconic content. If the medieval icon contained a piece of the cross or part of a bone or a saint, contact with it could deliver real effects' (Bond 1998:2).

Picasso's collages exemplify the avant-garde engagement with the index. In his collage, *La Suze (Glass and Bottle of Suze)* (1912), for example, the bottle label

"*Suze*" is taken from an actual bottle of *Suze*.[6] In this case, the signifier is also the referent. However, whilst the use of indexical elements in his collages may enrich the social meanings that a viewer can gain from the work, Picasso does not claim that the index carries with it any power other than its symbolic richness. This contrasts with contemporary work that in some way acknowledges a medieval belief in the force of the index. Ecological feminist art practices—for example the work of Ana Mendieta—and shamanistic tendencies—such as in the performances of Joseph Beuys—exemplify this second impetus.

The difference between twentieth century avant-garde applications of the index, and shamanistic and eco-feminist attention to the index points to quite a different understanding of the power or force of the index.[7] The latter, as Bond points out, is grounded in the medieval belief in the power of the index. In a secular culture, where the work of art no longer is ascribed such power, is it possible to re-instate the image with a dynamical force akin to the relic?

The Power of Imaging

Peirce's elaboration of the index helps us to address this question. Peirce first used the notion of the index to theorise the relationship between the photograph and its object (Freadman 1986:97). The link between the photograph and the referent has been complicated by darkroom and digital manipulation, but there remains, particularly in family photographs, a belief in the existence of the referent. In asserting this link with the referent, Olkowski makes the comment that:

> In certain photographs, those that are loved, the fact that the photograph is literally an emanation of a real body, that light is the carnal medium, that the image is extracted, mounted, expressed by the action of light and the body touches me with its rays, attests to the fact that what I see is a reality and not the product of any schema. (Olkowski 1999 209)

Activating Barthes' notion of the *punctum*, Olkowski argues that it is the *punctum* that provide this expansive force in a photograph.[8] She contends it is this force that becomes 'more than the photographic medium that bears it so that what you see, what is created, what is thought is no longer a sign within a symbolic system but becomes the thing itself' (Olkowski 1999:208).

This assertion raises some interesting questions for contemporary photographic practices, particularly photo-documentary. Given the expansive force of

the punctum, could the photo-documentation of Ana Mendieta's performance work become more than a sign that stands in for the performance? Miwon Kwon's claim that these photo-documents are 'souvenirs', is based on a notion of loss—'the missing body *in* the image and the missing event *of* the image' (Kwon 1995:170). Following Olkowski, I would argue differently. I would propose that, rather than being markers of loss, the souvenirs of Ana Mendieta's land/body works can burst the boundaries of their medium and actually become what Mendieta claimed for them; 'after-images'.

In photography, we can explain the trajectory from the referent to photograph by reference to the physics of light. Photography is indexical. There is a direct causal link between the referent and the photograph. In collage the referent can become identical with the sign. What of a realistic or mimetic painting? What is its relation to the referent?

I have already proposed that mimetic painting can exceed its status as a sign and become the thing in some way? Drawing on Peirce's elaboration of the dynamic object and the indexical sign I have argued that a dynamical relationship between the immediate object and the dynamic object implicates the facts of matter. I now want to turn to Peirce's definition of the sign to question the "standing in for" that tends to characterise the contemporary critique of mimetic imaging, since in this relationship painting comes to be seen as representationalist.

Peirce defines a sign or representatum as 'something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity…. The sign stands for something, its *object*' (Peirce 1932:135). To "stand in for" and to "stand for" are to be understood differently. With respect to mimesis, the object has been assumed to be what Pierce terms the immediate object, that is, the idea or mental representation that is already a semiotic construction. This assumption precludes the dynamic object, since it is outside the sign and, as Butler points out, we cannot know this outside. For Butler we can only ever talk about the sign of the matter, since matter ceases to be matter once it becomes a concept. In a similar way, it seems that the object ceases to be an object once it becomes the idea of the object. In the slippery world of signification, the dynamic object is elided and we can only deal with the sign of objects. Moreover, according to this paradigm, the referent can only persist as a kind of absence or loss (Butler 1993:67). According to such conceptualisations, the painting can only stand in for its object; it can never *be* it.

At the level of the reception, the work of art tends to be limited by such a mode of thinking. It blocks other modes of apprehension. At the level of

practice, this mode of thinking encourages the suppression of the deictic or indexical mark in favour of meaning and signification. Thus, Elkins observes that, 'semiotic accounts tend to gloss over marks in favour of the scenes themselves' (Elkins 1998:3). The 'not-sign' in the picture goes unremarked. In this relation, the painting is reduced to representation and its equipmental-being as sign forecloses other possible modes of Being.

Attention to the selection and organisation of iconic and symbolic elements within a painting—or what Benjamin calls paint's presence—allows us to describe the painting and ascribe meaning to it. However, what new insights can we gain if we shift our focus to take into account the materiality of the paint as well as paint's presence? What if the sign is open to the energies and forces of matter; the matter of objects, bodies and materials?

We are in the habit of asking the question as to how meaning is mediated by paint's presence, but are less inclined to ask how paint's presence is mediated by materiality. I want to put a different spin on Peirce's *object*. I would suggest that this some-*thing*, is not just the immediate object, which is already an idea, but also includes the dynamic object, and thus operates at the level of matter as well as at the level of form.

Bois (1998) tries to get at this "thing", in his analysis of Cézanne's paintings. In his quest to understand the change in the dynamics in Cézanne's paintings, Bois contrasts Cézanne's late watercolours with his paintings of the *Couillarde* period. Of the late watercolours he would claim that the 'works are themselves lungs … they breathe' (Bois 1998:39). In contrast, he notes that 'the heavy facture of the "Couillarde" period, although strictly atomic, could only prevent … transparency and fluidity' (Bois 1998:39). They were breathless. He suggests that, in these earlier works, there was a struggle to work something that was yet to be unconcealed. Bois describes this as a 'contradictory anticipation of [a] method which he could not yet envision' (Bois 1998:39).

In Cézanne's struggle to realise, there was "something" that had not yet materialised. It was not as yet constituted as a sign. In the interplay between the motif, the matter of Cézanne's body, the materials of production and cultural knowledges, this something was in process. The painting becomes a dissembling presence, rather than a representation or a sign. In this conception, the painting cannot be reduced to a sign, but *can* become more than its medium can bear. The work breathes. Thus, Bois makes the comment that the late watercolours of Cézanne are lungs. They breathe (Bois 1998:39).

This materialisation recalls Butler's claim that matter is always materialised (Butler 1993:9). However Butler's exhortation that 'to return to matter requires that we return to the matter as a sign' (Butler 1993:49), situates matter within the world of already-constituted language and meaning. Yet, this is not where we can locate Cézanne's struggle. As Bois points out, during his *Couillard*e period, Cézanne was unable to envisage what he was doing and where this might lead (Bois 1998:39).

The breath in Cézanne's paintings brings us back to Deleuze's understanding of the mutual reflection between bodies and language. It is also suggestive of Norman Bryson's elaboration of deixis. According to Bryson, the deictic marker is 'reserved for utterances that contain information concerning the locus of utterance' (Bryson 1983:87). It is 'utterance in carnal form' (Bryson 1983:88). The indexical sign or deictic marker thus links us back to the making and allows us to consider the trace or index of both human and non-human actors. Deleuze's notion of flexion, the Peircian index, Bryson's deictic marker and Benjamin's materialisation, suggest that there is a relation between matter and materialisation. Materialisation is an "effect" that points directly back to the dynamic object and the external world, both the materials and the body of labour. It is no longer merely an absence that the sign attempts to fill. Rather it is the effect of the productivity that occurs in the interaction between the different bodies in labour. Here bodies are both human and non-human.

Working Hot

I have noted that each artwork exemplifies or evokes a particularity or singularity. How do we explain that some works have a life and breath, whilst others are heavy and breathless? Not every painting or drawing is so productive that it breathes or becomes, as Bois puts it, 'simultaneously a molecular surface and the depicted object in the act of germinating' (Bois 1998:39). Here I want to turn to Benjamin's analysis of Tony Scherman's painting *Hecate as Stag* (1994). In his review, Benjamin questions whether the painting comes to perform Hecate *as* stag. The central problem, as Benjamin sees it, is whether the paint's presence and the materiality of the paint can achieve the transfiguration whereby it becomes-present *as* Stag.

Not every work, or every work of one artist, yields a productivity that *is*. It is not an easy matter to produce an intensive series that is transformative. In the heat of practice, the body has the potential to become language and the work may take on a life of its own. However, nothing can guarantee such visual performativity, or predict it in advance. Visual and lingual performativity

involve a complex interaction of forces and energies. Some days are hot and some are not. Moreover, the moment the logic of practice is interrupted by the logic of contemplation, the intensity of work changes. The molecular flow solidifies into a molar mass. Consciousness intervenes and representational thinking can take over from the logic of practice. In this mode of apprehension, rhythm gives way to conscious reiteration. The breath goes out of the work. Here the danger exists that the work becomes an illustration of an idea, not a realisation of "little sensations". It becomes representational rather than performative. Performativity is inextricably tied to a dynamical relation between the matter of bodies and objects. In this very sense, the performativity of the work of art is a consequence of thrownness or being-in-the-world.

The performativity of practice is a central paradox in art practice. In the creative act, the artist may no longer set the world before her/him as an object, but rather becomes a passageway which allows for a total openness to the essence of art. Heidegger's understanding of thrownness is central to the trajectory taken here. We recall that, in its thrownness, *Dasein* has the propensity to transcend the existing situation. This propensity to go beyond, notes Levinas, 'does not have the character or a plan established beforehand' (Levinas 1996:25). It is not representational, nor is it accessible to contemplation. In the heat of the moment, possibility is seized in its very possibility. The crucial moment of understanding, that is the work of art, happens in this being thrown towards one's own possibilities and in the realisation of small sensations. Working hot is this crucial moment of understanding.

Art is a Performative Practice

In this Chapter, I have argued that life gets into painting through what Peirce has termed the "dynamic object". This relation is a 'dynamical (including spatial) connection both with the individual object, on the one hand, and with the senses or memory of the person for whom it serves as a sign' (Peirce 1955:107). If we accept that the index stands in dynamical relation to its object, I believe that we can argue that the work of art can exceed its limits as representation and become more than the medium that bears it. Further, I would suggest that this materialisation involves a mutual reflection rather than a one-way causality.

Deleuze's notion of flexion allows us to extend our understanding of the performativity of creative practice, to include the possibility that there *can* be a *mutual* reflection between bodies and language. In the performativity of flexion, the body writes and is simultaneously written. In this way just as life gets into

images, so imaging also produces reality. According to this proposition the material practice of art can transcend its structure as representation and, in the dynamic productivity of the performative act, produce ontological effects.

It is through such observations that we can return to Martin Heidegger's remark that the 'artist remains inconsequential as compared to the work, almost like a passageway that destroys itself in the creative process for the work to emerge' (Heidegger 1977b:166). In the creative act, the artist no longer sets the world before her/him as an object, but rather allows a total openness to the Being of art, that is the "work" of art. This openness is expressed in Cézanne's claim that the 'landscape thinks itself in me … and I am its consciousness' (Merleau-Ponty 1993:63) and in Petyarre's observation that the 'old women are also holding their country as they dance' (Voight 1996:221). In this way I believe we can begin to understand that art is a performative not a representational practice.

CONCLUSION

"Life imitates art" is a throw away line used when we are faced with an inexplicable situation where everyday life seems, in some uncanny sense, to exceed what we normally expect of "reality". At such a time, we may doubt what we have witnessed or experienced. Yet, we rarely inquire further into our sense of the bizarre relationship between "reality" and art. *Art Beyond Representation: The Performative Power of the Image* embarks on such an inquiry. Working from experiences that have risen in my art practice, I have addressed some of the instances where there appears to have been an odd exchange or mutual transmutation between imaging and reality.

As praxis, this book has proceeded in fits and starts. At times it has moved at a great pace, with ideas tumbling over one another and jostling for space. At other times the work has been laborious. It has taken paths already taken before and has traversed them painstakingly. Initially I was preoccupied with the need to move tactically so as not to create a "picture" and make a representation of practice. I felt I had to take care that I didn't become too self-conscious or representationalist in my effort to bring about the "ruin of representation". However, as we have seen, the praxical engagement with tools, materials and ideas produces its own kind of sight. Such knowing occurs at the level of hands and eyes and operates in a different register from the representational paradigm of "I"-as-subject in relation to mere objects. In the flux of practice, acts and decisions occur in the heat of the moment and not as the result of rational logic. In this space art produces effects of a very different order to that of mere representation. It is here that the relationship between life and art may be considered anew. In the dynamic productivity of practice, imaging doesn't merely represent reality. Through a monstrous performativity, images leak into the world and produce it in some unforseen way. This is the power of the work of art.

It is through Heidegger's notion of handling that we come to understand that movement *is* a condition within practice itself. At the level of hands and

eyes, the artist works in relation to tools and materials, producing a movement away from representationalism. Through a return to the relations of artistic practice, I have demonstrated that the artist's relation to her/his tools is not one of mastery, nor is it instrumental. The relations of care and responsibility that characterise artistic practice involve a particular responsiveness to, or conjunction with other contributing elements that make up the particular art ensemble. Through Heidegger's notion of concernful dealings and my own practice as an artist and writer, I have come to understand that through our dealings with tools, materials and ideas, we are co-responsible for allowing the emergence of art. It is through this dynamic and productive relation that art emerges as a revealing. The work of art *is* this movement.

The problem for artists in a contemporary technocractic era, is that we become so focussed on creating and marketing artwork that we forget we have a responsibility for the emergence of art. As a result of the domination of art by art business, I have wondered whether it is still possible to make art. In the world of art business it is so easy to become caught up in an enframing mode of revealing. Here, our materials and tools become means to an end. In the contemporary world it very difficult to experience art in its *poiētic* mode since we are constantly in the process of making it for exhibition, promoting it, analysing it and writing about it. In all these multifarious activities, the work of art tends to be reduced to its equipmental-being. However, I have come to understand that it is through *process* that we can escape such instrumentalism. In handling our materials and our ideas, the work asserts itself and speaks. Process lifts us out of the molar field of instrumentalist logic into the molecular field of the logic of practice. Here art is revealed in its *poiētic* form.

Whilst art may once have been viewed as the privileged site of *poiētic* revealing this no longer holds. If art is to be an essential and necessary part of being, then it is in the midst of beings that art must happen. Thus, if in our everyday life we are open to possibility, such day-to-day practices as cooking and eating may be *poiētic* rather than instrumental. Here, lived embodied experience is the element in which art thrives. In our contemporary technocratic society, art is no longer contained within the province of art business. Art has been brought into the midst of life.

In the early Chapters of this book I took up Heidegger's notion of art as revealing. However, as I proceeded, I began to worry that this notion of revealing is grounded in Eurocentric and Enlightenment understandings of our being-in-the-world. Whilst Heidegger's theorisation of the revealing potential of the work of art goes beyond representationalism, it continues to

operate within Enlightenment modes of thought. His positioning can not accommodate the possibility that the performative potential of images involves a productive materiality. In my experience as an artist working in the blinding glare of Australian light, I came to understand that ontological experiences are situated. Heidegger's conception of light refers to a European experience and he maintains a Descartian binary between the ontic and the ontological. In conceiving of art as a revealing, his ontology fails to take into account a different experience of light and the way in which the ontic and the ontological are co-emergent. My experience of the Australian sunlight has led me to question the fundamentalism of Heidegger's earlier work.

In my endeavour to show the way in which the ontic and the ontological are co-emergent and to open up the possibility of a materialist ontology of the work of art, I drew on my experience of working in the glare of the Australian sunlight. Through this, I have been able to demonstrate that the co-emergence of the ontic and the ontological is differential and relational and that art as revealing is culturally mediated. An examination of the cultural practices of Indigenous Australian artists allowed me to establish a material basis for this differential and relational ontology. Following the work of Paul Carter, I activated the term *methexis* to account for the radical material performativity of Indigenous Australian cultural productions. What emerges in and through *methexis* is a different sort of practice and a different politics of practice. Just as hammering in a workshop shows up the web of significant relations, so in *methexis* a pattern begins to emerge from amongst the shifting shapes of relational ontologies. The process of *methexis* allows us to recognise how it is that there is a transmutation between art and life. It is concerned with the veritable material productivity of the performative act.

In the concept of *methexis* there emerges the possibility for articulating an embodied theory of practice that takes into account the matter of bodies and objects. Such a materialist account of creative practice questions our customary ways of thinking about the work of art. In a world where the conceptual has become the dominant framework informing both visual arts practice and its reception, my argument may seem at odds with prevailing views. However, my earlier discussions of handling and handlability, suggests that any attempt to separate the conceptual from the material is problematic. The conceptual artist, who conceives of a work, but does not physically craft it still 'handles' ideas. Our concernful dealings with ideas constitute the work of philosophy and theory as art. Hence the practice of "conceptual" art operates in the same way as the concernful dealings with brushes, paint, canvas and ideas or objects in painting. The claim that certain forms of art, for example, conceptual art,

only address the brain and rationality, whilst other forms act directly on the nervous system, serves to reinforce the Descartian mind/body split. Since the brain *is* part of the nervous system, such a separation of the conceptual from material or bodily processes creates a false dichotomy. The practice of art is always embodied. My argument that there is potential for a transmutation between imaging and reality in the work of art, holds as much for conceptual art as it does for literature or material practice such as sculpture or drawing.

In the carnal acts between bodies (human and non-human), the work of art exceeds its own structures in a radical performativity. In the heat of practice, the body has the potential to become language and the work may take on a life of its own. Through process, the outside world enters the work and the work casts its effects back into the world. We are quite literally moved.

Such a materialist ontology offers both an ecological and ethical challenge to contemporary technocratic conceptions of the work of art. It sets in place a different conception of visual practice and visual aesthetics. Practice becomes imbricated in culture as an alternative mode of representation. In setting out a materialist ontology of the work of art, I have suggested that we can set the work of art in motion to take us to a place other than where we usually are.

NOTES

Chapter 1: Transcending Representationalism

[1] Donald Brook's article was initially entitled 'On the Ontology of Visual Representation'.

[2] Martin Heidegger makes the observation that we 'first arrive at science as research when and only when truth has been transformed into the certainty of representation. What it is to be is for the first time defined as the objectiveness of representing, and truth is first defined as the certainty of representing in the work of Descartes' (Heidegger 1977a:134).

[3] The view that representation is a reflection of reality has been overturned and its successors have in turn been overturned. From being a reflection, representation mutated into a system of signs which constructed reality and was then overturned by the dissimulation of simulacra which, at least in Baudrillard's world, expelled reality altogether. In this re-presentation is overwhelmed by simulations. See Baudrillard *Simulacra and Simulation* (1994)

[4] See Norman Bryson's *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze* (1983), for an extensive discussion of the 'natural attitude' and the 'essential copy'.

[5] 'The Age of the World Picture' was originally published in *Holzwege* (1950). In this thesis I am referring to the text published in translation in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (1977a). The translator for this edition is William Lovitt. That the version I read is in English and not German is significant in terms of Derrida's discussions of representation and translation. I do not read or speak German and thus what I am dealing with is a representation of *Vorstellung*.

[6] Heidegger argues that the event in which the world becomes a picture occurs simultaneously with 'the event of man's becoming *subiectum* in the midst of that which is' (Heidegger 1977a:132).

[7] Michel Foucault (1972) also attributes representationalism to Descartes, although he identifies a different periodization.

[8] The root of mathematics is *mathesis*, meaning fore-knowledge.

[9] Heidegger's use of the generic term 'man' to denote human beings is problematic. However because of the complexity of the argument, I have followed other commentators and have maintained this usage in the first Chapter of the book.

[10] Judovitz proposes that, in Descartes, the unknown must always be already figured or represented in the order of the known (Judovitz 1988:75).

[11] Latour's focus on the precise practice and craftsmanship of knowing is supported by Foucault's discussion of the interdependency of science and technology in *The Order of Things* (1970). For both thinkers, it was this interdependency that changed the way knowledge was made and hence the way the world was understood. For example, it was the coming together of science and technology in the invention of perspective that enabled man to place himself at the centre.

[12] In Latour's thinking, immutable mobiles play a crucial role in the practice and politics of persuasion. They are representations. As representations, they are the vehicles used to bring others over to a particular point of view. In his very specific concern with inscriptive processes, he demonstrates how people argue with one another using paper, signs, prints and diagrams (Latour 1986:3).

[13] Foucault's archaeology of knowledge addresses the 'general space of knowledge, its configurations, and the mode of being of things' (Foucault 1970:xxiii). Latour suggests that it is in *Discipline and Punish* (1979) that Foucault's analysis of the operation of discursive and disciplinary practices comes closest to his own notion of inscriptions.

[14] The link between inscriptions and market economics has long been debated in the visual arts. In his article 'The Sublime and the Avant-garde' (1984b) Lyotard shows how the quest of artists to bring the unknown into the known, or present the unpresentable, becomes complicit with market economics. Lyotard's criticism of the collusion between market economics and the avant-garde derives from the avant-garde's quest for the new and its direct relationship with the need of market economics to keep feeding the monstrous desire for the new and innovation. He makes the point that 'one has to concede that the art market, subject as are all markets to the sovereignty of the new, can exert a kind of seduction for artists' (Lyotard 1984b:43) Nye has termed this constant craving the 'consumer sublime'. See D.E. Nye *The American Technological Sublime* (1994).

[15] The understanding of Being forms the central focus of all Heidegger's philosophical enquiries. In order to get to the being of beings, he establishes a fundamental distinction between a be-ing (*das Seiende*) and the Being of beings (*das Sein des Seienden*). For Heidegger, the central question

is not the activities or practices of human be-ings, but rather what such activities and practices can reveal or disclose about the Being of be-ings. Heidegger observes that in our attempts to understand the being of the human being we have a tendency to fall (*Verfallen*) into the habit of the everydayness of be-ings.

[16] Derrida's essay has been reproduced extensively. I am working from the version reprinted in A. Easthope and K. McGowan (eds) *A Critical and Cultural Theory Reader* (1992).

[17] The phrase "the ruin of representation" has been used by several feminist writers, including Dorothy Olkowski, Joanna Isaak and Michèle Montrelay. Joanna Isaak initially used the term in her review of the exhibition *Difference: On Representation and Sexuality* (1984-5). She saw the aim of the exhibition as being to 'investigate the means by which the subject is produced and… to effect the "ruin of representation"' (Isaak quoted in Olkowski 1999:69).

[18] It needs to be remembered that Heidegger's pre-occupations lie elsewhere. He is not fundamentally concerned with genesis. His primary concern is with the forgetting of Being and how Being has been replaced by a concern with beings.

[19] Interestingly there has never been any success in compiling a dictionary of visual language. Whilst there may be taxonomies of visual symbols, graphic marks seem to defy such classificatory systems. This is not to say that we don't attribute meaning to different marks.

[20] This could be contrasted with the rhizomatic structure that characterises friendship structures. As Deleuze and Guattari note, 'the tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:25)

[21] In her article 'Heidegger and the limits of representation' (1988), Olkowski attributes Heidegger's failure to get beyond representation to his conception of being and time. Whilst he may have withdrawn time from the straight line, she argues that he then became caught up in the circle. She proposes that Heidegger is compelled to 'follow the circle, appropriation remains the trace, the presence of what is absent, be it being or time' (Olkowski 1988:104).

[22] See Martin Jay (1993) and Michael Levin (1993).

[23] It is in this conception that we come closest to Heidegger's conceptualisation of the 'world as picture'. Olkowski contends that the system of representation 'operates by establishing a fixed standard as the norm or model' (Olkowski 1999:2).

[24] In differentiating between being and becoming, Levinas makes the point that even whilst becoming can be seen in its intimate sense as duration, it does not fundamentally transform the ontological basis of consciousness (Levinas 1996:28).

[25] In his article 'The Ontology of Culture-way-markers', McHoul defines Da-sein as 'any being that, in Heidegger's fundamentally non-psychologist and non-cognitive sense, understands its being, in its very being, as what it is itself' (McHoul 1999:89).

[26] The quest to develop non-representational theories is addressed in Nigel Thrift's article, 'The Still Point: Resistance, Expressive Embodiment and Dance' (1997). He provides a summary of the some of the key ideas that underpin so-called non-representational theory.

Chapter 2: Contingency and the Emergence of Art

[1] Although Heidegger's examples are somewhat dated, his fundamental question becomes of greater relevance the more humans intermingle with machines. Developments in the field of robotics and genetics amplify this trend.

[2] Andy Warhol's factory offers a further example that could be the subject of such analysis.

[3] See Matthew Biro's book *Anselm Kiefer and the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger* (1988) for an analysis of the counterpoints between the work of Kiefer and the theorising of Heidegger.

[4] The work of Jeff Koons is exemplary in the context of this discussion.

[5] In his distinction between the craftsman and the fine artist and between *technē* as enframing and *technē* as *poiēsis*, Heidegger pre-empts and reinforces the privileging of fine art over craft. Like craft, art is technological as *technē*. However in its mode of revealing the Being of beings Heidegger sees art as fundamentally different. Art subsists within the mode of revealing as *poiēsis*, whilst craft subsists within the mode of revealing as enframing. In this mode, the tools of the craftsman exist as standing reserve and craft ultimately is destined to an instrumental role.

[6] Heidegger designates the study of being-right-there as the analytic of *Dasein*.

[7] Foucault's article 'What is an Author?' (1984) is a response to this way of thinking.

[8] See also Bruno Latour's elaboration of objects as actors, particularly his article 'Mixing Humans and Nonhumans Together: The Sociology of a Door Stopper' (1998b). In his theorising, Latour conceives of objects as lieutenants who have been delegated to carry out particular functions. Thus he argues that what defines our social relations is in large measure prescribed back to us by non-humans. In this, he continues, 'knowledge, morality, craft, force, sociability are not properties of humans but of humans accompanied by their retinue of delegated characters' (Latour 1988b:301).

[9] Haraway distinguishes between actors and actants. Actors have character, whilst actants operate at the level of function (Haraway 1992:331). In that sense, it may be suggested that actors with their own particularities contribute to actants, which are structured according to what they do. Thus humans and non-humans become part of the 'functional collective that makes up an actant' (Haraway 1992:331). In Heidegger's example, silver smithing could be seen to be the actant bringing together a collective of actors including the silver, equipment, chemicals, artist etc. in productivity.

[10] Conversation with Estelle Barrett 23/08/00.

[11] A Deleuzian analysis of forces, speeds and intensities could provide an alternative account of Expressionism to traditional art historical explanations. Expressionist explanations place the focus on the artist expressing inner most feelings and thoughts. Deleuze's input would not deny the affective element of an expressionist account of art production, but rather to complicate any such account.

Chapter 3: The "Work" of Art

[1] In *The Postmodern Condition* (1984) Lyotard argues that the postmodern artist or writer is in the position of the philosopher. He writes that 'the text he writes, the work he produces are not in principle governed by pre-established rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgment, by applying familiar categories to the text or the work. Those rules and categories are what the work of art itself is looking for' (Lyotard:1984a:81).

[2] In her book *A Voyage to the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-medium Condition* (1999), Rosalind Krauss adopts the term 'post-medium' to describe such phenomena.

[3] Heidegger's essay 'A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer' (1971) provides an exception to his preoccupation with Western culture.

[4] I iterate that the apprehension that a rock is just a rock only holds for a certain Western thinking that does not attribute life or "spirit" to inanimate things.

[5] That a rock is "called" a rock is also dependent on a socially agreed code. Here I want to tease out the way allegory works to encode layers of meaning.

[6] Jean Baudrillard has called this sign work "semiurgy". The concept of semiurgy is developed in *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (1981). In his understanding, an object's status is determined by the system. An object is a status of meaning and form. Gary Genesko puts it simply: 'Work in metal has given way to the work of signs' (Genesko 1997:5).

[7] Not all language conceals the thingness of the thing. Poetry has a privileged place in Heidegger's lexicon. For him the essence of art is poetry. It provides that 'open region that brings beings to shine and ring out' (Heidegger 1977b:197). In fact Heidegger goes further and claims that 'in setting the truth of beings on its way, all art is, in essence, poetry' (Heidegger 1977b:197).

[8] Where art enters the economy of exchange it has exchange value or use value. This is where art business takes over Art.

[9] McHoul notes that it is significant that whilst most artworks are created by hand, very few are consumed, read or appreciated by hand (dialogue with McHoul 25/05/01). In fact, until recently "touch" has been actively discouraged in most traditional art museum contexts.

[10] Meyer Schapiro wrote to Heidegger and asked him: 'Which picture exactly were you referring to?' In reply, Heidegger said that he was referring to a painting exhibited in Amsterdam in 1930. For Schapiro, this clearly indicated that the painting he was referring to was 'de la Faille's no. 255' (Schapiro quoted in Derrida 1987:276). Derrida questions whether this is *actually* the version referred to in Heidegger's essay. What complicates the puzzle is that the painting discussed is variously titled as *Old Boots with Laces*, *Old Shoes with Laces* and *A Pair of Shoes*.

[11] The problem of illustration besets much of philosophical discourse on art. Art is used to illustrate a philosophical point.

[12] In his discussion of signs, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger does not introduce the notion of interpretation. He talks about the equipmental character of signs. See Okrent (1988:84-86).

[13] The distinction between craftsmanship and *technē* is often used to create a hierarchy of "artist" over "craftsman". The development of Heidegger's

argument does nothing to dispel this. He is keen to differentiate the artist's actions from craft, even if the artist is also a craftsman. 'What looks like craft in the creation of a work is of a different sort' (Heidegger 1977b:185).

[14] The same can be said about the contemporary reception of *Fountain*. Its thing-being has been overtaken by the thing-concept. It is reduced to a "ready-made".

[15] Formalism aimed to do this by eliminating the object altogether. However, formalism ended up replacing the representation of realism with the representation of abstraction which is also representationalist in its thought. Thus bottles and bodies and landscape are replaced by shapes, rhythms, forms and colours.

[16] The Australian Council of Art and Design Schools released the following preamble to their 2000 conference: 'Artists are professionals. They work in an "arts industry" in which outputs can be measured in terms of employment, investment and export potential. Since artists are "in business" they need business skills; marketing, promotional and financial management skills. Codes of practice have been set in place to provide the necessary practice "benchmarks" and to ensure compliance with codes of practice. Art and design schools have adopted models of training to bridge the gap between training and professional practice. Finally "best practice" has been adopted so that artists are able to broker partnerships, engage in resource sharing and utilisation, find external sources of revenue, be flexible and find the best options, solutions and actions' (ACUADS 2000).

[17] Levin suggests that Heidegger's reference to "gods" can be deciphered as 'those extraordinary moments of local visionary unconcealment in which something of the greatest importance about the presencing of beings *as a whole* is given to illumination' (Levin 1993:212-213).

[18] In some senses, the Gestalt image of the vase and two facing profiles can illustrate this movement. If we bring into focus the vase shape, the two profiles disappear. If, on the other hand, we see the two profiles we can no longer apprehend the vase shape that is we cannot simultaneously apprehend the vase and the profiles.

[19] This state of coming to rest in itself, Heidegger terms "repose". Yet, a state of repose can only be envisaged in relation to movement. In the setting up of a world and the setting forth of the earth, there is movement. This movement produces intensification. It produces an inner concentration of motion. Thus, Heidegger suggests that 'where rest includes motion, there can exist a repose which is an inner concentration of motion, hence supreme agitation, assuming that the mode of motion requires such a rest' (Heidegger 1977b:173).

[20] In developing his thinking on *Dasein*, Heidegger pays particular attention to its emanation as everyday *Dasein*. The distinction between *Dasein* and everyday *Dasein* returns us to the differentiation between the ontic life of human beings and a being's concern with its very Being. Where *Dasein* understands its fundamental possibility of being-in-the-world, it is open to self-understanding. This is *Dasein*. However existing necessarily leads *Dasein* to fall into everydayness. Levinas explains that this fall into everydayness results in *Dasein* understanding itself via entities in the world rather than via the world itself.

Chapter 4: Shedding Light for the Matter

[1] Josephine Wilson is a Perth-based writer working in the area of performance writing. The performance text, *Geographies of Haunted Places* (1997), offers a feminist and post-colonial critique of British imperialism in Australia.

[2] See Levin (1993) for a discussion of Heidegger's attempts to overcome ocularocentrism.

[3] "Presenting the unpresentable" refers to Lyotard's elaboration of the sublime which is developed in the article, 'Presenting the Unpresentable: The Sublime' (1982). I would suggest that Lyotard's model still remains within the binaries of Enlightenment thinking. I agree with David Rodowick that Lyotard's discussion of aesthetic work and postmodernity implies an Enlightenment conception of the subject. Rodowick sets out his discontent in the footnotes to his article, 'Reading the Figural' (1990).

[4] For a critique of the impact of Cartesian perspectivism on Indigenous Australians see Ian McLean's book on *The Art of Gordon Bennett* (1996)

[5] In an article 'Im/pulsive practices: The Logic of Sensation and Painting' (1977), I argue against Deleuze's dichotomisation between the rationality of the brain and the nervous system. Since the brain is part of the nervous system, his claim that certain forms of abstraction appear to address the brain and rationality whilst the figural acts directly on the nervous system seems to set up a false dichotomy.

[6] Drawing on her fieldwork with the Warlpiri people, Biddle argues that the forceful and constitutive effects of these the re-iterative and citational practices include 'rejuvinating the country or a species; controlling fertility; regulating social relations and relatedness; causing illness and healing' (Biddle

2001:179). The *Kuruwarri* sign, according to Biddle, 'is not representation, not as that which refers, defers, to speech, sound or word, but rather as a force itself with effects: an inscription that inscribes, an imprintation that produces, marks that make' (Biddle 2001:183).

[7] In this context it is interesting to compare the Greek myths with what is known as the "Dreaming". In the modern age, the Greek legends have become "just" myths. This fate also threatens the stories of the Dreaming. However, Indigenous elders warn of the danger of such a fate. It is only through the maintenance of the Dreaming, that they believe their country can be sustained, maintained and productive.

[8] The contrast between birth as the first choreography and birth as the first displacement relates to psychoanalytic notions of linking lack with desire. *Methexis*, it could be argued, digs 'desire' out of the hole of lack and locates it in the folds of the ground, along with colour and all sorts of mortal rubbish. Thus *methexis* could be seen to sit comfortably with Elizabeth Grosz's conception of 'desire'. She proposes desire as actualisation: 'Instead of aligning desire with fantasy and opposing to the real, instead of seeing it as a yearning, desire is an actualization, a series of practices, bringing things together or separating them, making machines, making reality. Desire does not take for itself a particular object whose attainment it requires; rather it aims at nothing above its own proliferation or self-expansion. It assembles things out of singularities and breaks things, assemblages, down into their singularities. It moves; it does' (Grosz 1994:165).

Chapter 5: Working Hot: A Materialist Ontology

[1] For Kristeva's theorisation of the somatic dimension of language, see *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (1982) and *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1984).

[2] See Taussig's (1994) elaboration of the power of the image in non-western understandings of ritual images and ritual objects and Belting's (1994) discussion of the comprehension of the image before the age of art.

[3] Rosalind Krauss' article 'The Im/pulse to See' (1988) explores the pressure on or pulse in the see-able.

[4] See Deleuze's writings on the logic of sensation in *Francis Bacon: Logique de la Sensation* (1981). This work has been translated as *Francis Bacon: the Logic of Sensation* (2003) by Daniel Smith.

[5] Jonathon Culler (1975) has renamed Peirce's symbol as the 'sign proper'. In this redesignation there is recognition that both the icon and the index have qualities that exceed the sign as commonly understood.

[6] Francis Frascina (1975) provides a semiotic reading some of Picasso's collages, including a reading of *La Suze (Glass and Bottle of Suze)* (1912).

[7] For a discussion of this difference see Rosalind Krauss's (1988) article 'Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America' and Georges Didi-Huberman's (1988) article 'The Index of the Absent Wound (Monograph on a Stain)'.

[8] Roland Barthes' notion of the punctum in photography finds its correspondence in painting, in Mieke Bal's (1991) elaboration of the navel.

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