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Towards an Ecology of Institutional Critique

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Art's political role has traditionally been played out along the axes of the avant-garde, where art's (bourgeois) autonomy is either destroyed in the merge of creative processes and social production, or art's autonomous creative powers are pitted against the clichés of the culture industry. The thinking of Felix Guattari has been used by recent work on institutional critique (IC) to produce a contemporary instantiation of the first of these narratives, one that draws upon his idea of an 'aesthetic paradigm' in order to understand IC in the widest possible sense, as an aesthetic mechanism offering political resistance to the digital and mass-media that produce our contemporary 'life.' While this use of Guattari by IC is both justified by his texts, and politically urgent, it produces a polemical rejection of art 'itself' which Guattari does not share, and which, for those of us not entirely seduced by the wonders of the internet, sharply reduces the aesthetic possibilities of art *therefore reducing* our power of political action. While it is true that Guattari's aesthetic paradigm offers us powerful theoretical tools for resisting capitalist technologies and their programs of standardization, recent work on IC has privileged politics over art in a way that ignores Guattari's interest in the ecology of the aesthetic paradigm. By considering these elements of Guattari's work we will see how the project of IC remains

important, but not at the expense of more traditional, and autonomous art forms. Furthermore, according to Guattari IC finds its ontological foundation in Nature – understood as a material plane of immanence composed of, and composing difference - and as a result both 'art' and 'politics' are better understood as ecological practices seeking to protect and extend Nature's production of difference in "an authentic political, social and cultural revolution". (3E, 28)[1]

Brian Holmes – one of the most important theorists of recent developments in contemporary art – has recently discussed both Guattari's idea of 'transversality' and its use by Gerald Raunig in constructing a genealogy of IC in which it undergoes a 'phase change' in its third, and present, generation (IC3).[2] What is particularly interesting in Holmes' work is the way he sees this change emerging from the digitization of capitalism on the one hand, and the new strategies of critical resistance it opens up on the other. For Holmes, transversality describes the relations between artistic, theoretical and activist collectives formed in a digital network, each of which is always opening onto the others in a process Holmes describes as 'extradisciplinary.' Guattari no doubt offers both a theoretical and biographical model for this transversal activist.[3] The transversality of these networks finds its condition of possibility in post-Fordist capitalism rather than in anything that could be called "art," which means the "immanent critique" of IC3 escapes the museum or gallery, and is able to take aim at capital's commodification of affect and subjectivity. As a transversal or extradisciplinary movement then, IC3 avoids both the simple negation of the art institution by the first wave of IC, as well as the second wave that chased the institution into the subject. IC3 is neither tied to the institution it negates, nor obsessed with a subject it inhabits, and operates directly in 'life' – flush with the

real – as a (resistant) process of social production. This expansion of the critical field from 'art' to 'aesthetics,' another element found in Guattari, allows Holmes to establish 'politics' rather than 'art' as the function of IC3. Thus, it is "political engagement", as Holmes calls it, which inspires IC with a desire "beyond the limits of an artistic or academic discipline." IC undergoes a 'phase-change' when it manages to finally abandon art for politics, when it acts, according to Holmes, in "the new productive and political contexts of communicational labor (and not just in meta-reflections staged uniquely for the museum)."

So what is produced in this communicational *work*? Although Holmes does say that the analytical processes of IC3 are expressive and "awash in affect and subjectivity," these expressions, he argues, "can no longer be unambiguously defined as art." This is obvious enough, because the aesthetic production Holmes identifies as 'art' is precisely what IC3 'critiques.' The problem here, an aesthetic *and* political problem, is that by identifying 'art' with the institutions that contain it Holmes rejects almost all art as complicit, and insists that IC3 is not art but politics. For example, Holmes ironically suggests that IC3 projects can evoke "the "free play of the faculties" and the intersubjective experimentation that are characteristic of modern art," but he immediately subordinates such experiments to the political task of identifying "*inside those same domains,* the spectacular or instrumental use so often made of the subversive liberty of aesthetic play." (italics added) IC3 is therefore a mechanism that interrogates the institutional production of sensation as to its instrumentalisation, and presumably produces its own affects and subjectivities subsequent to, and as a result of this interrogation. Unfortunately however, in his haste to turn IC3 into a viable political program operating in the world, Holmes tells us little about what transversal collectives

might produce apart from the defacto resistance emerging from their organisation. This, it seems to me, is to ignore that aspect of Guattari's work affirming 'art' as the aesthetic production of resistant sensations and subjectivities in favour of a 'political' process by which art is judged, and of course found wanting.[4] This is to ignore that aspect of Guattari's work that is most relevant today, his argument that 'art' remains, in its autonomy as much as in its engagement, the most important mechanism of contemporary 'political' resistance.

What is at stake here is the old avant-gardist ambition of merging art and life, an ambition that is increasingly achieved today by the manufacture and consumption of commodified affects and subjectivities by 'cognitive-capitalism.' IC3 is aimed at these circuits, attempting to disrupt them from within in order to reclaim the 'means of production,' to reclaim in other words, the economic mechanisms that produce 'life.' Guattari often affirms the necessity of such bio-political and collective action "in which the media will be reappropriated by a multitude of subject-groups capable of directing its resingularisation." (3E, 61) What he also stresses however, is that this is to be achieved through aesthetic means, through the production of material expressions, of errant and singular sensations that evade capitalism's programming. I use this last expression deliberately because it raises the very important question of how an immanent critique of contemporary capitalism can be achieved. Guattari writes: "Subjectivity is standardized through a communication which evacuates as much as possible trans-semiotic and amodal enunciative compositions. Thus it slips towards the progressive effacement of polysemy, prosody, gesture, mimicry and posture, to the profit of language rigorously subjected to scriptural machines and their mass media avatars. In its extreme contemporary forms it amounts to an exchange of information

tokens calculable as bits and reproducible on computers." (C, 104) Holmes seems to take the transversality (and therefore the political resistance) of IC3's use of digital media for granted, and does not address the possibility of its own instrumentalisation. It seems to me, on the contrary, that although Holmes' description of 'extradisciplinarity' does include the possibility of 'trans-semiotic' production, his description of IC3's political critique largely ignores Guattari's insistence on the corporeality of aesthetic affects such as polysemy, prosody and gesture. This is not to reject IC3 in favour of a return to traditional aesthetic technologies, rather it is to extend Guattari's critique of the homogenized corporeal experience peddled by the 'info-economy' to IC3's own use of capitalist technologies. This is to refocus on Guattari's insistence that creation is an affective and corporeal process, and to repeat his pitching of aesthetics against the scientific paradigms of 'innovation' producing contemporary 'affect-commodities.'

The Italian philosopher and media theorist Bifo has repeatedly drawn attention to this problem, arguing that the new media establishes an overarching form within which content is a matter of little concern: "According to the user interfaces realized by the programmer, technology can function either as an element of control or as an agent of liberation from work. *The political problem is entirely absorbed within the activity of the mental worker, and of the programmer in particular*. The problem of the alternative, of a different social use of certain activities, can no longer be detached from the very forms of this activity."[5] Bifo therefore poses the politics of 'exodus' in terms of escaping technological controls that subject us to the horrors of the capitalist economy. IC3 claims political efficacy by existing within the realm of 'communicational labour' (Holmes), but it remains to be seen whether it can distinguish its own 'creativity' from cognitive capitalism's processes

of valorization. In this sense IC3 must produce, as Bifo puts it, a "semiology of linguistic economic fluxes" that enables the liberation of its most pathic and 'artistic' tendencies.[6]

Holmes' account of IC3's use of information technology does not explain how it resists capitalism, only how it escapes the art institution. This leaves simple, but nevertheless important questions about the aesthetics of IC3 unanswered, questions that return us to Guattari's affirmation of polysemy, prosody and rhythm. Why, for example, is it so often necessary to read so much when faced with this work, which true to its 'political' aims is often heavily didactic? Why is IC3's use of new technology often indiscernible from its capitalist applications, being, for example, equally as 'informational' despite its differences in 'content'? And why does the critical politics of IC3 seem restricted to the subjective position of the "activist"? Holmes briefly discusses some 'actual' examples, all of which are collectively produced 'extradisciplinary' works documenting large infrastructure projects and the social upheavals surrounding them, while also reflecting upon their own representational conditions within capitalism. What I would like to argue is that despite the 'political' content of these works, this is not in fact the level on which they operate politically. Politics operates aesthetically, and it is aesthetically that IC3 must mount its resistance.[7] So although Holmes emphasizes the collective, critical and 'extradisciplinary' nature of IC3 (ie., its politics), his seeming lack of interest in the aesthetics of IC3 production means that its difference from, *and hence resistance to* capitalism's exploitation of the 'general intellect' is by no means clear. In fact, there remains the possibility that capitalism itself operates as a process of institutional critique in the name of wider and more flexible collective means of production. This would be one lesson of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. This is not to discount

IC3 as an artistic practice, nor as a political form of resistance, but it is to argue that the criteria for success are both aesthetic and material, and in this sense it is only by being 'art' (or perhaps a 'bio-aesthetics') that IC3 will achieve something as 'politics.'

Guattari's criteria for both art and politics is almost biological, they must be "capable, potentially, of developing and proliferating well beyond the existential Territories to which they were assigned." (3E, 40) These processes create the new, and establish the future as the realm of aesthetic and political contestation. Significantly, Guattari often refers to the realm of 'art' when discussing this process: "As in painting or literature, the concrete performance of these cartographies requires that they evolve and innovate, that they open up new futures, without their authors having prior recourse to assured theoretical principles or to the authority of a group, a school or an academy." (3E, 40) In this sense, 'art' is already a form of IC, an IC that resists bio-power by producing sensations that escape codification as "semio-capital."[8] This also means that the conditions of 'transversality' are not found in the 'new media,' nor in the constitution of a collective, but in the ontological and aesthetic "chaosmosis" of being, a process of invention constituting the plane of 'Nature.'[9] Guattari's "eco-logic" seeks to preserve and foster these creative and 'artistic' processes in order to construct transversal assemblages of natural, technological and experiential elements. Art's transversal medium would be "a pure being of sensations" that replace human, all too human perceptions and affections with affects and percepts, with "*nonhuman becomings of man* [... and] *nonhuman landscapes of nature*." (WP, 169) This Nietzschean cartography of forces "is more nervous than cerebral," (WP, 168) and places the political emphasis on escaping human experience rather than on escaping our political institutions.

Holmes' approach tends to turn IC3 into an avant-garde, one that gleefully rejects and destroys its own tradition along with the institution that contains it.[10] According to Holmes IC3 consists of transversal movements that escape the 'art' institution by revealing its complicity, by negating art's autonomy in order to participate directly in 'life.' Finally in IC3, as Holmes puts it, "the critique of the conditions has spilled out onto the streets." The activist aesthetics of IC3 echoes the Constructivist avant-garde, not only does it seek to merge art with the industrial technology of the (digital) 'revolution,' but in doing so it destroys art as a bourgeois commodity.[11] The immediate (avant-gardist) question arises whether such practices can be called 'art', and although Holmes' admits that even in the work of IC3 "one will always find remains of the old modernist tropism whereby art designates itself first of all," in this work "there is something more at stake." This 'something more' is the way IC3's critical faculty propels itself outside of its institutional frames, in a continual "passage beyond the limits". This means that although IC3 collectives emerge within the art-world, they escape instrumentalisation through their connections to critical aspects of other "assemblages of enunciation." These creative and insurgent elements construct a Multitude from their creative differences, which unleashes an expression of constitutive power. Although this does shift the debate from product to production, it nevertheless defines 'political art' against those sensations available within the 'autonomy' of art institutions. However, and following Guattari, it is difficult to justify on an ontological level this distinction between the 'political' escapes of IC3 and the encounters that may be available in a museum. Guattari's 'aesthetic paradigm' offers us an ontological revaluation of 'art' in which it escapes capture in capital's axiomatics, but this revaluation does not imply a distinction between politics and art. Indeed, Guattari returns to the avant-

garde to revalue and affirm its function in precisely the same terms Holmes uses to praise IC3, no longer as the rejection of 'art' in favour of 'life,' but as the emergence of art 'itself' inasmuch as it functions ontologically *as* 'life': "The incessant clash of the movement of art against established boundaries (already there in the renaissance, but above all in the modern era), its propensity to renew its materials of expression and the ontological texture of the percepts and affects it promotes brings about if not a direct contamination of other domains then at least a highlighting and a re-evaluation of the creative dimensions that traverse all of them. Patently, art does not have a monopoly on creation, but it takes its capacity to invent mutant coordinates to extremes: it engenders unprecedented, unforeseen and unthinkable qualities of being." (C, 106 see also 3E, 40)

In Holmes' account politics is the ontological term, and aesthetics is its mode of expression. This is an aesthetics of the Multitude where immanent expression is a collective, and even communist experience of social production. Art, or at least that inside the institution, remains antithetical to this. But it is also possible to argue that aesthetics is the ontological term that politics expresses. This would be an 'aesthetic paradigm' in which art maintained a privileged place, not least because of its ability to produce an individual sensation that Guattari will not hesitate to call 'cosmic.' This sublime "particle-sign" expresses its constituent and collective force by constructing a new reality. This has considerable repercussions for IC3, because it returns to art the possibility of being 'political' without having to engage in explicit institutional critique. In a similar way it removes the necessity of using the technology of Capital in order to operate immanently. It does not, however, do away with the idea that aesthetic expression acting against capital operates through mutant sensations that cannot be

immediately calculated. The question is what are these mutant sensations on an ontological level, and how do they operate? For Holmes these sensations are analytical in nature, produced by institutional critique as political interventions. They are not subjective in any bourgeois sense, but they nevertheless retain a recognizable activist subjectivity. They are, in other words 'against,' against the institution and capitalism, and it is this 'activism' that defines their aesthetic expressions. Similarly it is this 'against' that requires the most up to date technology to be politically relevant. Rather than criticizing IC3, whose projects are certainly amongst the most interesting and important experiments within the field of contemporary art, I want to point out that there is another way of approaching the question of political art, a way which also travels through Guattari, that both gives the 'traditional' arts a political function, and suggests an ontological diagram in which both art and politics become ecological functions of Nature.[12]

Although it is absolutely true that Guattari argues for an aesthetic paradigm that can include art, but not in its institutional form, it is not true that he rejects art's autonomy. This seems a paradox, because without its institutional form how can art be autonomous? This is certainly a paradox for Holmes, who sees no role for something we could call 'art'. Nevertheless, while Guattari's 'institutional analysis' attacks the institution of art, it does so in order for art 'itself' to directly participate in social production. Guattari calls his method one of 'metamodelisation', which "does not found itself as an overcoding of existing modelizations [as the traditional avant-garde does], but more as a procedure of "automodelization," which appropriates all or part of existing models in order to construct its own cartographies, its own reference points, and thus its own analytic approach, its own analytic methodology."[13] There is no question of posing a

standard model, just as there is no necessity of rejecting a given model. The question is instead one of resingularizing any given model by connecting it to another, a 'transversal' procedure that will allow both to explore their difference and their freedom.

This means that if we are to take metamodelisation, or 'schizoanalysis' as Guattari also calls it, as the third 'phase' of IC, then its task is not to deny art's autonomy, it is to put this autonomy into connection with other models in order for it to re-enter processes of social production. This is to emphasize the 'ecological' task of IC, one that is based upon what Guattari calls a "refoundation of political praxis." (C, 120) This is the refoundation of politics on aesthetics, aesthetics understood as an "ontological Pragmatics." (C, 95) Here aesthetics produces sensations that achieve a rupture in the model's (institution's) cohesion, and create a transversal connection to an outside that enables the construction of a new dimension of being.[14] This process of autopoiesis is one of "continual creation, which does not have the benefit of any pre-established theoretical support." (C, 71) This is the properly ontological dimension of creative freedom, in which nothing is given, and where the genetic process of individuation takes place. [15] Individuation is understood here as a pathic process in which a sensation both expresses and constructs its own conditions by continually interfacing with its exterior. These "limitless interfaces" or "nuclei of differentiation" (C, 92) are becomings, and constitute the autopoietic 'essence' of art. "It is this praxic opening-out," Guattari writes, "which constitutes the essence of eco-art." (3E, 53) The primary question for IC then, is not how such sensations are instrumentalised by Capital, although this remains important, *but how to produce them*. The question of instrumentalisation is secondary to that of individuation, because it is only by cultivating ecologies of invention within the realm of sensation – and first of

all, according to Guattari, *through the autonomy of art* – that the transformation of the institutional complexes that attempt to control and exploit them can begin. And this is finally what the aesthetic paradigm means for art, it exists at a point where any institutional definitions of art are meaningless, because art embodies a process of creation that cannot be captured by them. As a result, Guattari writes, "The aesthetic power of feeling, although equal in principle with the other powers of thinking philosophically, knowing scientifically, *acting politically*, seems on the verge of occupying a privileged position within the collective Assemblages of enunciation of our era." (C, 101, italics added) Although Guattari emphasizes that this power is not that of "institutionalized art" (C, 102) it nevertheless can appear there as it can everywhere.

Although Guattari agrees that "since becoming the work of specialized corporate bodies, [art] may have appeared to be a side issue," he nevertheless argues that art has "never stopped being a vital element in the crystallization of individual and collective subjectivities." (C, 130) Here, in a remarkable passage, Guattari claims that it is precisely the autonomy of art that allows it to have political effect. " Fabricated in the socius," he writes, "art, however, is only sustained by itself. This is because each work produced possesses a double finality: to insert itself into a social network which will either appropriate or reject it, and to celebrate, once again, the Universe of art as such, precisely because it is always in danger of collapsing." (C, 130) Art must be defended against this continual risk of collapse, because art - when it works - ruptures with the trivial forms and significations that circulate in the social field. As a result art escapes its institutional banalisation by introducing alterity into experience, a process that may happen in the museum or in the street. "The work of art, for those who use

it, is an activity of unframing, of rupturing sense, of baroque proliferation or extreme impoverishment, which leads to a recreation and a reinvention of the subject itself." (C, 131) Obviously, we don't all have to "use" art, and Holmes is quite right not to want to. What is not right however, is to conflate art 'itself' with its institutions, and to thereby reject art's autonomy on the grounds that it is simply an ideological mystification covering the complicity of art *qua* institution with capitalism. The crucial difference here is between Holmes' 'being against' and Guattari's concept of 'alterity.' For Holmes IC3 begins from the critical process of identifying complicit production, which today includes all institutions involved in modulating sensations for the market. [16] This seems to include all 'art' production inasmuch as this is necessarily defined by the institution. For Guattari, on the contrary, political practice begins as 'art,' now understood as the production of mutant sensations that have not yet been captured by the institution. 'Art' achieves this through its very autonomy, its alterity, its existence as 'itself.' Once more, this means that art's autonomy *qua* alterity produces a political affect that it is able to catalyze processes of social production. Furthermore, these affects are not necessarily collective in the sense that Holmes seems to suggest. Art is particularly effective, Guattari argues, in its ability to launch an individual onto a mutant line that carries them far from any normal state of equilibrium. Most remarkably art enables the individual to access the realm of the Cosmic, in the midst of which we are 'flush with the real,' our subjectivity 'reformatted' by the overwhelming sensation of the living power of immanence. As Deleuze and Guattari put it: "Art wants to create the finite that restores the infinite." (WP, 197) This would be the function of new-media machines *as* art, inasmuch as for Guattari, "The machine, every species of machine, is always the junction of the finite and the infinite." (C, 111) Here the criteria for art, as much

as for politics, is the 'event-incident' that is able to catalyze a transversal process expressing and constructing a Cosmic Nature as the plane of immanence. Here art poses the real political problem, which is not how to get back to this immanent collectivity, but to realize how we never left it: "We are not in the world, we become with the world; we become by contemplating it. Everything is vision, becoming. We become universes." (WP, 169)

This, for Guattari, is the function of art in a social context – mystical effusion, Nature poetry. Art takes us out, far out, a political 'trip'[17] towards "the collective for-itself and its fusional and initiatory mysteries." (C, 103) "The invocation to the Cosmos does not at all operate as a metaphor;" Deleuze and Guattari tell us, "on the contrary, the operation is an effective one, from the moment the artist connects a material with forces of consistency or consolidation." (ATP, 380) At this moment "the cosmos itself will be art." (ATP, 381) Deleuze and Guattari quote Virilio: "To dwell as a poet or as an assassin?" (ATP, 381) An assassin closes the possibilities of a people, whereas the poet attempts to "open a cosmos." (ATP, 381) Here, despite art's autonomy and individualism, it projects a future of collective life. This is an art-function that rejects both the romantic artist as lonely individual seeking to express a Natural creative force (God), and the communist artist as one of the people. "The artist has ceased to be the One-Alone withdrawn into him- or herself, but has also ceased to address the people, to invoke the people as a constituted force." (ATP, 381) The people are, Deleuze and Guattari argue, always *to come*. Art creates a future people by embodying a chaosmic and "virtual event," an event that is unlivable under the current state of things, an event that is intolerable within our current communities, an event that is nothing less than a revolution. A revolution is the embodiment of a chaosmic event

creating something new, and leaving as its monument a work of art: “A monument does not commemorate or celebrate something that happened but confides to the ear of the future the persistent sensations that embody the event: the constantly renewed suffering of men and women, their re-created protestations, their constantly resumed struggle. [...] The victory of a revolution is immanent and consists in the new bonds it installs between people. Even if these bonds last no longer than the revolution’s fused material and quickly give way to division and betrayal.” (WP, 176-7)

Within this cosmic, but nevertheless fleeting revolution ‘transversality’ operate as an “eco-logic” (3E, 44) or “ecological praxis” (3E, 45) that attempts to create alterity within institutions, causing them to mutate. In this process institutions are returned to the “primitive swamps of life” lying “beneath civilization,” (WP, 174) a teeming and unnatural ‘naturing nature’ “in the very act of its constitution, definition and deterritorialisation.” (3E, 44) Transversality is, once more, not dependent upon new technologies because it is the mode of existence of Nature, its means of becoming-other than it is, its means of Nietzschean growth. This means the “dissident vectors” (3E, 45) produced through transversality are not only as natural as they are technical, their ‘dissensus’ is material rather than discursive. Deleuze and Guattari are categorical in their rejection of conceptual art on this point, turning art into ‘information’ they state, is a form of capitulation. (WP, 198) This rejection has important art-historical implications for IC3. Art embodies an event that expresses alterity, and causes a positive transformation, “an event-incident that suddenly makes this initial project bifurcate, making it drift far from its previous path, however certain it had once appeared to be.” (3E, 52) Perhaps then it is merely a matter of words, and Holmes’ ‘activist’ is in fact my ‘ecologist,’ or ‘artist,’ because in the end, “Ecology,” Guattari

writes, “questions the whole of subjectivity and capitalistic power formations.” (3E, 52)

Those political activists like Holmes, who see in cognitive capitalism its immanence to life, its bio-power, and who regard this as the opportunity to launch their attack from within are correct in this assessment, but too exclusive in the mechanisms they regard as being appropriate to the task. We do not need any restrictions! The question is not to reduce the number of weapons available but to increase them. This is because although there may not be any outside to capitalism this is precisely the problem we face, a terrifying homogenization of true alterity in the ever-faster relative deterritorialisations that drive our accelerating market. This is the value of art, its function has always been, at least for Guattari, the production of dissident vectors of subjectivisation through non-signifying and asemiotic sensations, a function that must be protected through ecological praxis. Protection here means the preserving of art’s autonomy, “the Universe of art as such” as Guattari puts it, in order to foster its production of new existential territories, new refrains of life.

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[1] Guattari's concept of Nature is in no way essentialist. Nature is both all-inclusive and forever incomplete, it is the living process of becoming in which all things are included in an irreducibly multiple, and therefore open, whole. As Deleuze puts it in *The Logic of Sense*: "Nature must be thought of as the principle of the diverse and its production. [...] Nature as the production of the diverse can only be an infinite sum, that is, a sum which does not totalize its own elements. [...] Nature is not attributive, but rather conjunctive: it expresses itself through "and," and not through "is."" (p. 266-7) This process of production spans a Nature that is not opposed to humanity or to "culture", and does not enter into a dialectic with man. As a result Nature is as 'machinic' as it is 'natural', inasmuch as it is composed of, and composes, machines of production. As Deleuze and Guattari write: "There is no such thing as either man or nature now, only a process that produces the one within the other and couples the machines together. Producing machines, desiring machines everywhere, schizophrenic machines, all of species of life: the self and the non-self, outside and inside, no longer have any meaning whatsoever." (*Anti-Oedipus*, 2) 'Ecology' in this sense seeks to resist capitalism's production for the sake of production, in order to revalue (and to invent) the creative mechanisms (machines) by which cultural, social and

personal transformation is possible. In this sense Nature would be, as Deleuze and Guattari put it in *Anti-Oedipus*, the "production of production" (p.4) or the "production of the real." (p.32) In this context it is disappointing that Deleuze's death interrupted his and Guattari's work on a philosophy of Nature.

[2] See, Gerald Raunig, 'Instituent Practices: Fleeing, Instituting, Transforming', http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0507/raunig/en. And, Brian Holmes, 'Extradisciplinary Investigations. Towards a New Critique of Institutions.' In the web journal *Transform*, issue 1, 'Do you remember institutional critique?': http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0106/holmes/en, unpaginated.

[3] As Guattari tells us, he "sought to make discernible a domain that was neither that of institutional therapy, nor institutional pedagogy, nor of the struggle for social emancipation, but which invoked an analytic method that could traverse these multiple fields (from which came the term "transversality"." 'Institutional Practices and Politics', in *The Guattari Reader*, p. 121.

[4] Stefan Nowotny attempts to fend off this criticism by distinguishing between *judgments* and *practice*. Nevertheless, the question still remains as to how IC's 'practice' functions. Nowotny writes: "One possibility [for IC] certainly consists in a *political* analysis of the respective constellation, in which institutional critique is articulated. This means assuming a perspective which takes into account the specific functionality of the art field within the concrete social-political context, ranging beyond the self-referential structures of this field, and which also includes a view of the changes, to which this functionality and thus the conditions of critique are subjected. Here I would like to propose a somewhat different approach, however, which does not contradict the first at all, but should rather be appended to it: an approach that envisions

"critique" less in keeping with the model of a *judgment structure* (roughly speaking, in other words, a subject that *positions* itself *vis-à-vis* the criticized conditions), but rather with the model of a practice (meaning a subject that *is involved* and *involves itself* in a specific way *in* the criticized conditions)." 'Anti-Canonization, The Differential Knowledge of Institutional Critique'.

[5] 'Technology and Knowledge in a Universe of Indetermination', in *Substance* 112, vol. 36, no. 1, 2007. p. 68.

[6] Bifo, 'Schizzo-Economy', in *Substance* 112, vol. 36, no. 1, 2007. p. 77.

[7] Holmes suggests as much in his discussion of Michael Goldberg's work in 'The Speculative Performance', in *transversal*, issue 'extradisciplinary'. http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0507/holmes/en/print#_ftnref5

[8] "Semio-capital is capital-flux that coagulates in semiotic artifacts without materializing itself." Bifo, 'Schizzo-Economy', in *Substance* 112, vol. 36, no. 1, 2007. p. 76.

[9] "Now more than ever," Guattari writes, "nature cannot be separated from culture; in order to comprehend the interactions between eco-systems, the mechanosphere and the social and individual Universes of reference, we must learn to think 'transversally'." (3E, 43)

[10] In 'Extradisciplinary investigations' Holmes rejects all of the neo-avant-garde movements since Pop as not achieving real breaks with the institution but merely importing outside themes, media and techniques back into it. In 'The Oppositional Device or, Taking the Matters Into Whose Hands?' he rejects the "performance poetics" defining all "Vanguard art" of the Modernist

era in more radical terms, claiming it has always "been integrated into the programming of contemporary liberal societies" inasmuch as it only offers a choice "within the range of possibilities that the author has channelled." This is precisely the problem with the institutions within which the avant-garde tradition exists today, according to Holmes, they operate as control mechanisms modulating and directing our attention under the auspices of offering a freedom of choice. (In *Taking The Matter Into Common Hands, On Contemporary Art and Collaborative Practices*, p. 36-7. Edited by J. Billig, M. Lind, and L. Nilsson. London, Black Dog, 2007) This is not the place to discuss this in depth, but Holmes does rather seem to be making a leap here. Surely the avant-garde cannot be reduced, politically or aesthetically, to its forms of consumption, even if its institutionalization can?

[11] This avant-gardist program is shared by other advocates of IC3 clustered around the *Transversal* web-journal. Gerald Raunig writes, for example: "If institutional critique is not to be fixed and paralyzed as something established in the art field and confined within its rules, then it has to continue to develop along with changes in society." 'Instituent Practices: Fleeing, Instituting, Transforming'. Stefan Nowotny is another who advocates IC3 as "an open field of a knowledge of action, a practical knowledge that rejects reintegration into the form of ends specific to art and in which the differentiality of institutional critique is actualized." 'Anti-Canonization, The Differential Knowledge of Institutional Critique.' As we shall see, Guattari maintains an important role for art's autonomy, and invisages it as part of a process of critique.

[12] Both Holmes and Nowotny refer to the writings of Robert Smithson as a forerunner to their own accounts of IC. What is perhaps ironic in this reference is that they fail to mention the final stage of Smithson's career where he was no-longer interested in

analyzing the constrictions placed on art by the institution but instead escaped into the desert to construct his 'Earthworks'. Here Smithson approached an ecological function for art that draws upon similar concepts of Nature to Guattari's own. I have discussed this in more depth in 'Eco-Aesthetics: From Structure to Entropy in the work of Robert Smithson, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari,' in *Deleuze and Ecology*, edited by Bernd Herzogenrath. London: Palgrave Macmillan. England. Forthcoming 2007.

[13] 'Institutional Practice and Politics', *The Guattari Reader*, p. 122. Holmes suggests something similar in relation to the art world in 'The Oppositional Device or, Taking the Matters Into Whose Hands?', *Taking The Matter Into Common Hands, On Contemporary Art and Collaborative Practices*, p. 41.

[14] "schizoanalytic modelisation substitutes an onto-logic, a mechanics of existence whose object is not circumscribed within fixed, extrinsic coordinates; and this object can, at any moment, extend beyond itself, proliferate or abolish itself with the Universes of alterity with which it is compossible." (C, 65)

[15] For a fantastic account of individuation in these terms see, Alberto Toscano, *The Theatre of Production, Philosophy and Individuation between Kant and Deleuze*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

[16] See, 'The Oppositional Device or, Taking the Matters Into Whose Hands?', *Taking The Matter Into Common Hands, On Contemporary Art and Collaborative Practices*.

[17] It is surely no accident that Guattari, who trained as a pharmacist, should take the title of *Molecular Revolution* from a talk by Timothy Leary.