

TO CONFRONT TECHNOSCIENCE'S MUTATION OF EMBODIMENT

Making-for-Art Confronts its Relations to Medium, Embodiment, and Technoscience

If, in their very different ways, but also in their common participation in the languages of everyday life, the 'fictions' considered above took on some of the profound dilemmas marking their, our, and art's relation to living within technoscience's dynamic, a range of performers in the other arts likewise explore the implications of our immersion in the dynamic for their co-gathering relations to languaging and specific materials. And, as the focus of their performing is on areas of experience and 'living' that resist appropriation by ordinary language, so their gests draw us into different dimensions of technoscience's remodelling of 'life'. In the particularity of the experiences they offer each provides an opening onto the relation between embodiment and the technical; they expose, differently, the profundity of the mortifications and the re-energising that bodies undergo in the course of living through technoscience's epochal mutations. Making-toward-art (the Body over there) in the course of absolutely singular gests, they make the tangent, the passing-touching point where the calculative and embodied-becoming come together, the riveting focus of their explorations; this is what their probing gests seek to expose as performing's (and thus the Body of Art's) plight. But what might it be 'about' embodiment's plight now that confronts performers gathering themselves within matters other than written and spoken words (the gests to be offered later are drawn from music and the visual arts) and whose transliterative almost-languagings give primacy to synaesthetic sensings aside from the reading-hearing of ordinary language?

Recalling the concerns of Prynne and Sebald with the half-buried cultural memory traces that, seemingly long-gone, are still etched deeply into 'our' post-Pleistocenian bodies as they pass through their post-ice-age cultural terrain,¹ contemporary performing (like all of us...) is confronted by a body-transforming machinery that subjects embodied-becoming to the necessity of continuous mutation and adaptation. In taking on the experience of this mutation, what is at stake for performing, always under the absolutely specific circumstances of each project, is the question of how it can show its consequence *for Art's Body alone*. The performer's 'own' (is it not precisely the 'ownership' of 'the body' that is in question now?) body is put in the service of art, of Art's Body, not as its 'representative' or 'representation' *but solely in order to keep it going* (over there and away-from-here). It is not this or that performer's body that is exposed in performing and its gests but, through the transubstantiative leap, the possibility of Art's Body still being able 'to become' (to keep going, to sur-vive...) over there. As Celan showed us it is '*la poesie*' that makes itself patent, lays itself open, not the performer, for performing transforms the latter's embodied-becoming into the medium-in-hope through which the possibility of Art's survival is offered. For every performer this performing is always Art's last and only hope.

¹ The Pleistocenian legacy of these memory traces as they may impinge on our contemporary relation to time is also pointed to by Don DeLillo in 'Point Omega' through the words of 'Richard Elster' when he speaks of his feeling for time in the desert where he lives: 'Time becoming slowly older. Enormously old. Not day by day. This is deep time, epochal time. Our lives receding into the long past. That's what's out there. The Pleistocene desert, the rule of extinction.' Don DeLillo, 'Point Omega', Picador, London, 2010, p. 72. Perhaps, too, 'Elster' can be heard as an echo of Proust's artist 'Elstir' which, in turn, was surely intended to recall 'Whistler', the echoes retreating ever further into the past.

Each performing, each gest, is thus the occasion for showing embodied-becoming's contemporary fate as it searches for its 'own' possibility in the midst of its defining circumstance - 'the body' (this includes *all that we 'are'*) as the subject of and for, the vehicle that enacts, the ceaseless driving movement of capitalised technoscience. It is this energised movement, in which we all collaborate unavoidably, that performers across all the traditional media both have to live by but simultaneously treat, whether obliquely or directly, and perhaps confrontationally, as their project-defining question. For, as per-forming is necessarily a forming-*through* (per-), what it has to pass through and what passes through it are precisely the matters that are in question for it. And while each gathering art-embodiment matter - the conferens - may give primacy to its specific defining matters (the real sensuous materials through which it 'surfaces'), because the arts under modernity have been both academicised and programmed into the organisations responsible for culture's routine maintenance, these materials are now manifestly the object of an intense *thought* that draws much of its charge and its resources from that very culture - the culture that 'works' (and thus 'lives') through the taken for granted 'advantages' of calculative reason. Performing becomes a strange interplay between the performer's profound sensuous attachments, the unreason of imagination, the entirely unpredictable play of memory, and rational-calculative critique, with the interplay across these processes being co-implicated by the performer's immersion in and suffusion by 'ordinary' language, the language of everyday relating (itself replete with the commonsense that enables one to 'get by' in the calculative culture). Of course making-toward-art has always been absolutely dependent upon the intricacies of thinking's entwined relations with the composing-aligning activities of performing, but never before under the complex rule of critical evaluation operated through the indissoluble integration of market and technoscience. Performing still generates its gests through the marking-depositing processes that are the culmination of the performer's intensely attentive synaesthetic combine of thought-full feeling for art's chances. But they emerge in and in response to circumstances in which what the 'bodied' part of embodied-becoming is taken to be undergoes continuous theoretical (and thus, through the ontologies and epistemologies at work there, metaphysical) and practical reconstitution (the body consumed and transformed by the encasing prosthetic apparatus of reconstructive work-and-play).

The post-pleistocenic model-body that we are all now presumed to share is a variant of the powered machinery (itself undergoing endless modification and displacement through the knowledge-research drive of the technical forces of production) that maintains the consumptive-productive processes. Still centred largely on combustion (as opposed to non-combustive energy sources) through modes of 'burning' of fuels to produce the controlled measurable flows of energy necessary to maintain its working-consistency, this body is, in the process of its being generated by separable specialist disciplines as a container of 'objects of knowledge', continually broken down according to its functions and what controls them. The split between the 'mental' and the 'physical' is fundamental to this separation process, though the threshold between them undergoes continuous revision. Apart from the abstract conception of it as a system tending towards homeostasis (a balanced relative equilibrium of the forces maintaining each function) there is no sense of the total body that can have a 'unity' apart from this integrated functioning. 'Life' is what emerges from the near integration of separable functional processes, most of whose pathologies can or will be treatable, repairable, and, in technoscience's longer run, substitutable by an 'equivalent' alternative (designed) function. A 'healthy' 'life' is thus dependent on the availability of a multiplicity of singular therapeutic interventions in the body's failures and short-falls, the machineries for which are designed ever more precisely to respond to the malfunctioning of the separate sub-systems. When 'life' ceases to keep this

functional complex going, its remainder, the corpse, is now in the occident most likely to be disposed of through the same functional process that had maintained its living - combustion.

For the knowledges that we now rely on and thus 'live' by, this living-complex is a 'whatever-body', an 'any-body', a 'body-typical', that is always separated from everything else. It is just 'a' body, never 'your' or 'my' body but rather a 'body-in-general' that can never be anything other for these knowledges (and thus for our commonsense that has little option but to feed off and 'live' through them) than an example – an 'occasion' for further work. Of course commonsense also knows that we are simultaneously both the same and not the same 'under the skin', as does medical practice too in the course of its real practice on each body. But the latter's knowledge systems have no way of recognising or responding to this confounding duality. By contrast, making-toward-art, when it takes on its 'own' embodied-becoming, makes this non-space between the two – same and not-same – the elsewhere in which it tries to subsist, very temporarily in the time of performing. And what it always has to confront and respond to, however obliquely, is precisely the question of what is its, one's, my, your, 'own'. Is this embodying that I 'am' some 'thing' that can be a 'possession', something that 'I', or someone else, can 'possess', something that can be a 'property' that is ownable? Can it be attached to some 'one' (the thinking 'self') or possibly 'many' (the multiple 'selves') presumed, at least in the course of our reliance on the grammar of commonsense, as partially independent of 'it', as a matter of ownership?

We continually and unquestioningly use the possessive in everyday life to refer to embodiment, 'a body', as if it were the property of a subject, an independent thing in 'your' or 'my' possession, some 'thing' that belongs to a willing responsible subject that could be separated from its possessions, its properties. Grammatically it appears as a thing somehow 'given' in perpetuity to a 'one' that might just, at death for example as a something-spiritual, migrate elsewhere, might be detachable from it. According to grammar's personal possessive then it appears as that which a 'one' can set up at a certain distance from 'itself' as its 'proper' body, a proper body to keep close company with the 'one's' 'proper' name.

But, as technoscience does not provide us with a unified 'body'/system of knowledge that defines either 'life' or 'the body' for us, what the latter are taken to 'be' in both technoscience and commonsense are thing-processes without identity. They are words that refer to constructs whose boundaries and thresholds vacillate in an unlightable obscurity. The more we probe the words for limits and fixity the more they recede from our grasp at knowledge. The more complex the machinery of analysis and research the more the possibility of locating definitive answers to questions about our defining 'properties' and limits evaporates. We are left clinging to nothing but convictions that, arising from our sensational experiences, are encased by a vagueness intrinsic to our very becoming as just this embodied 'person', a becoming surrounded by and in complex relations with multiple other such seemingly similar 'persons'.

Living-on in and as this 'lack', this apparent shortfall in knowledge, it seems that our plight calls for the necessity of our becoming reconciled to the absence of a 'proper' body. If we experience ourselves as experienced witnesses only to the mutations that constitute embodiment's 'interim' (living-on) between conception and termination, then we cannot count on, let alone count, its properties. Indeed the methodic practices of technoscience's knowledge-discourses display the consequences of this shortfall in the way that every 'finding', every emergent 'object of knowledge', as the out-folding of a previously 'hidden property' (the appearance of the previously unseeable), becomes in its turn that which hides other 'properties-to-come' awaiting

exposure through further uncovering work. For technoscience this re-constituting work, and thus the ‘properties’ it ‘*exposes*’, are endless. Living-on in the culture which moves through and within this ‘rule’, we are left with a sense of embodiment’s becoming (where, it must be emphasised, under technoscience ‘embodiment’ would refer only to ‘the body’ as some thing assumed to be separable from ‘thought’ and thus ‘becoming’) that is nothing but patent, a patency continually being exposed in and as its open-endedness, its limitlessness. And if our legacy from this patency is a sense of embodiment as that which is not quite, not yet, ‘proper’, that which, mutantly recessive, eludes all attempts to appropriate (make it ‘proper’) and fix it in its correct cosmological position, then does this render it ‘improper’?

Perhaps not, for embodied-becoming goes forth, I suggest, aside from the polarity of proper-improper. And perhaps the question of impropriety arises only when ‘embodied’ is split in the course of ‘thought’ from ‘becoming’ and is taken to refer to ‘a’, to ‘the’, body as a separate-something that ‘exists’ partially independently of the thoughtfulness that also constitutes becoming. ‘The body’ then becomes a thing for the ‘thought’ (technoscience and swathes of commonsense) which has subtly managed to withdraw itself from embodiment and place itself outside the body in order to treat the latter as an alien observable entity. In thus releasing itself from its bodily dependence, asserting the force of its splitting in the very grammar through which it points to its abandoned body as if it were ‘over there’, thinking feels free to deny both its absolute containment by and its simultaneous partial constitution of embodiment’s becoming. But perhaps, in advance of this split, the passing through and away that ‘is’ embodied-becoming, the going-on that it performs, is the passing-through-together of incommensurables. Perhaps such passing-along performs a relation between two that, while not yet split, do not constitute a ‘one’ but rather a becoming-together, and thus a relation, before the conditions for any actual relating – thought’s splitting itself off – have been instituted by either thought or the circumstances of living. Such a relation-before-relating, a togetherness of those that cannot be reconciled or elided, is a virtual relating in which separables are held together, mutually intertwined (for the time being), as ‘one’. This not-yet-relating constitutes the advance-guard of the real relations to come, at the ready for the actual splitting accomplished in language’s interruption and its eventual collusion with the projects of knowledge. Perhaps this becoming-passing, lacking in all propriety while not being in the least improper, performs something that is entirely appropriate to the becoming-together, the sharing, sustaining the two incommensurables (becoming-embodied and becoming-thoughtful) in advance of either appropriating the other.

And it is right ‘there’, I suggest, in the in-between of that togetherness where the two incommensurables inseparably subsist together, that making-toward-art strives to intricate itself as the necessary, the appropriate, condition for its performing. This is what it tries to undergo, where it tries to get to, in the notional ‘getting back’ of the de-creative drive. *It wants to find and expose in its gest the terms of unsplit relating as that which Art’s Body bears for us over there.* This is to reiterate in slightly different terms the earlier assertion that what is always at stake for performers is that their performing carries the entire embodiment of Art’s Body, its abjection and thus its potential-as-weakness. Without their embodying performance Art would ‘have’ no such Body. Performing goes through, passes by way of, the performer’s embodied-becoming only as the most enormous project of displacement, of casting out. For the entire drive is aimed at suspending what, in everyday life, it and everyone else identify as ‘its own’, its ‘proper’ body, and asserting in its place *only that which, in the course of performing, it discovers is vital to and appropriate for the survival of Art’s Body.* It is the latter’s ‘condition’, in its current extremity, the plight of its abjection, that has to be laid bare, exposed. And what every performance is

trying to make patent in its resuscitating gest is that *this Body is precisely propertyless - it is the Body that possesses nothing*. It can have, each time, only what is 'offered to' it in the course of performing's singular and circumstantially specific response to its plight, performing's plight as the literally particular materialised embodying of Art's plight.

Each performance is thus simultaneously a diagnosis and a leaping curative in whose course it seeks to become a 'moment' for and of Art's Body as the necessary condition of its double response. In order to feel-think itself into and as Art's Body, performing is thus challenged to perform a becoming-without, an embodied-becoming in which whatever commonsense recognises as its 'own' properties, the powers that it 'possesses', are put out of play. Only then does it lay itself open to possession by the sensed qualities of abjection that it discovers as it scours its circumstances for the marks of Art's plight.

No matter what 'properties' are attributed to 'it' according to the current state of knowledge, we can 'see' that these are just for the nonce and that the 'real' 'body', the defined 'body' (surely the body we would all in our everyday life would like 'to have' (wouldn't we?) in order to 'know just what we were dealing with'...) remains up ahead permanently out of reach. As such this never-to-arrive (under technoscience) 'proper body' is a fiction, sometimes comforting in an out-of-this-world sort of way, but, in its permanent absence and deferral, more often, perhaps, disturbing. But perhaps it is precisely the tension, in all its occluded intimacy, of this incommensurability of joyful-comfort and life-trembling-disturbance that making-toward-art is trying to 'make-toward', to live within, and to try to find material ways of exposing as the 'point' of its performing: each gest a remainder, a singular residue, of an attempt to live-as and to render simultaneously that fragment which the performing experienced as vital to the maintenance of Art's Body in its difference - the Body that cannot be reconciled with 'how things are'. *In giving itself over to this experience performing is acknowledging that it, and thus art's possibility, is dependent precisely upon its becoming propertyless*. It has, at crucial but always unpredictable 'moments', to give itself up to and thus be seemingly possessed, taken over, by something else - the other(s) 'within' that, already coursing through and accompanying its everyday becoming unbeknownst, interrupt the latter and turn it into a temporary spokesperson for, and, with luck, a materialising embodiment of, Art's becoming Body. But since this take-over can only be attributed to that Body (constituted by uncountable and unboundaryable fragments aside from any whole) which epitomises propertylessness, performing cannot become its 'possession'. As the 'without' of identity, this Body that can have no proper name cannot turn performing into its possession.

Rather it is performing that instigates its embodied-becoming by leaping out of culture toward the drifting assembly of Art's fragmented Body, thus laying itself open as a receptacle for whatever passing waved particles of the Body it can attract. Through the brazen exposure made patent in this (f)lying-in-wait,² it becomes the active partner in a collusive exchange. The laying bare of its self-emptying proffers an invitation to whatever-alien-others to interruptively break through the fragile connections stringing together mundane thought, to enter into, and then to occupy performing's embodied-becoming on their way through and away. Within the myriad that makes itself felt there some elements, with luck, may be potential bearers of Art's difference. Performing takes its chances and hopes that, in what it withdraws from this myriad and begins to fix and respond to within its emerging gest, there are fragments that carry

² Perhaps the written voice of the prone body considered earlier (in the remarks on Beckett's 'Company') could be read as a performer's response to the '(f)lying' of this '(f)lying-in-wait'.

sufficient traces of Art's Body to sustain its leaping away and maintain the abyss between itself and culture. For this is the only hope for Art's ungatherable Body - the Body-unbecoming that shows us that there is still, but perhaps only just, the faint hope of becoming-differently (to 'what is' under capitalised technoscience). Without the collusion of performing risking its patency to attract something bearing the culturally irreconcilable (and in this same movement risking both utter rejection and absolute absorption), something that might just cling on somewhere in the cracks between the self-confident certainties sustaining the culture machine, there is no chance of Art's Body surviving as culture's elsewhere.

But this is the machine that routinely operationalises technoscience as the provider of the material means and processes for the generation of value. As the great integrator, it seeks to control the emergence and distribution of values (both symbolic and economic and the precarious, finally unfixable, relation between them) at the sites where the processes of consumption-production coincide with the emergence of value (of everything). And art, performing and its gesticulations, along with many other practices and relations, have to live out their strange half-lives in the febrile tension between symbolic and market value that is being sustained (directed and managed) by a culture machine whose 'product' is the routine representation of 'social life' back to itself. It is in and as the processes of this representation that technoscience is now received, engaged, and, largely, taken for granted. For this is where the 'sense' of everyday life's possibilities 'is' now worked out (imaged, figured, sounded, texted... synaesthetically mounted) within the global infospectacle.

And it is at the thresholds where this machine engages its recipients, including obviously those seeking to make-towards-art, that embodied-becoming has to confront its fate as the represented amalgam of the interests of technoscience (the arch-manipulator and applier of technically specific 'knowledges' as it operates beyond the confines of routine social control), and the machinery of representation (that now subsumes all other forms of representation, political included). 'The body' that we 'know' about has come courtesy of technoscience. This is 'the body' that has been set up and turned out for us in the complex processes of representation that constitute this amalgam of interests. And, as ever under the rule of knowledge (always distributed between and generated by different technically specialist zones and their discourses), it is a 'body-in-general', a 'typical body', that is both split off from the synaesthetic experience of the embodied-becoming of everyday life and continually sub-divided according to the developing research interests of specific knowledge-zones. The fractured knowledges from these zones (what 'the body' in its different functions is taken to be, to be able to do, to withstand, and to work at in collusion with the controlling knowledges) are filtered through into everyday life via physical machines of representation (absolutely dependent upon a constant supply of electronic power) that are themselves also products of other zones of technoscientific practice.

At the level of the routine dissemination of 'meaning' the cultural machinery that carries out 'ordinary' representation adapts this continual flow of 'new' technology (the real physical machines through which something is generated and mediated) as best it can and fills it with whatever 'content' is deemed appropriate to the spheres of interest it supports. In the routine machinery-sustaining activities, both its meaning-constituting practices and how these are to be 'taken' (understood and used) by recipients (all of us), the over-riding working priority is to ensure that its own representing procedures - its constitutive forces - become 'invisible', unquestionable, and unequivocally taken for granted. The 'how' of representation, the 'doing' of its entire constitutive (framing, shaping, forming, seducing, persuading, cajoling...) apparatus, has to be 'disappeared', while its supposed 'what', its constituted 'content' - the programmed

passing through and away of the info-spectacle - has to entirely consume our attention. This 'medium-formed content', as the stringing together of programmed 'non-events' (everything appearing across the now largely integrated media is staged as a separable bounded 'event', whatever its media-composite (image, text, sound, touch...)), is, quite understandably, ordered around the appearance of 'bodies' assembled and re-constituted according to each medium's specific programming requirements and syntactic conventions.

Across the media, in whatever combination they are set to work, 'the body' provides the fundamental 'material', and thus the machinery-defining challenge, for the process of representation. 'The body', 'bodies', their appearance and activities, and thus their circumstances, their relation to the contexts in which they appear and the events in which they are implicated, are representation's subject matter, what its machinery works on and re-constitutes in its (re-)constructive (re-)productive drive. But what it takes as this basic subject matter, what it elaborates in the course of its routine programming, is 'the model body' handed over to it (and to commonsense) by technoscience; this is what it has license (granted by the particular technical requirements and facilities of each medium) to endlessly re-assemble as it determines what and how things shall appear. As offered above, it is 'a body' without either identity or boundaries that gives the 'creative industries' extraordinary scope for inventive work in a culture where the design of appearances enacts the aesthetic of everyday life. For this constitutes the threshold where the febrile relation between consumption and production is worked out (invariably to the advantage of production since its design work sets up the terms for consumption's response); it is also the crucible of the relation out of which 'values' drift, circulate, and become fixed by representation. Allocated its place on this frontline, this decentred 'body-typical' becomes the perfect vehicle for the re-designing work, committed to 'innovation', that manages the aestheticised flow of what appears (to be the case) and the endless reconstruction of taste. Because for technoscience 'the body' it models and hands down is an assembly of separable (infinitely sub-dividable) parts and functions that do not add up to a 'one' transcending this multiple, it appears as a repository of spare parts and processes.

And technoscience's implicit promise, through its alignment of the abstractions of supposed 'pure' science with the presumed 'use' requirements of embodied-becoming's shortfalls and failures (the all too real pathologies of pain, suffering, functional decay, entropy...), is that of eventual universal replacement and substitution of this multiple. In this decentred system ways will eventually be found for replacing every separable sub-system without affecting 'the whole', for the latter for technoscience is a fiction of the displaceable myths of a now outmoded commonsense. For this model each 'one' of us is a collection of what are essentially spare parts and knowable processes whose artificial cultivation, reproduction, and gatherability, will eventually enable removal of faulty systems and transfer into the collection of effectively functioning alternatives. This is, of course, a further mode (already operative across specific areas of 'medicine') of the general process of representation that defines what 'living' now lives by. The collection is a receptacle-in-movement of mappable, measurable, controllable, and thus replaceable parts; its 'life' occurs through the integration of energy-conversion processes, knowledge of whose functioning will be established through cross-disciplinary integrations and paradigm shifts. These will in turn generate different specialisms currently beyond technoscience's reach.

But is it not this very 'body' that making-toward-art is seeking to avoid by whatever performing modes it can devise? Committed to sur-viving at, to making the most of its synaesthetic experience of passing between, the conjunction of, becoming and embodiment, performing is

surely trying both to make patent the troubling plight that is the legacy of technoscience's 'body-as-parts' and, simultaneously, to show different ways of relating to the indivisibility of felt-thought: *performing as a setting forth of gests congealing the necessary possibility of a not yet embodyable otherwise-becoming*. In making toward this otherwise that cannot yet be, it may be that performing moves around 'extremities' that are routinely taken as defining the edges of art's relation to its co-gathering of materials, self, other, and the real material processes sustaining enfolded-becoming. Yet, whatever the 'extremity' of performers' leaps into and engagement of the zones where these edge-conventions may appear, they cannot be compared to the constitutive extremity occupied by technoscience in the course of what Lyotard calls its 'complexification' through a process of 'scanning' of everything without end. For technoscience scatters all boundaries, bonds, and bodies in its careering away (with all of us in its tow) towards its mythic inter-planetary future. But what has to trouble us, the disaster of the plight that troubles making-toward-art and gives it its 'reason' for performing, is that this 'power to "put in series" that is at work on planet Earth' has the human race as 'its vehicle much more than its beneficiary.'³

Commenting on the way the human race has to dehumanise itself, to 'become tele-graphic' (all of us as subjects of and subjected to a new logo-machy of writing-at-a-distance that operates within an emergent form of machine-dependent memorising - information-storage-and-retrieval) in order to 'rise to the new complexity', Lyotard points to the ethical issues this raises. These are issues that relate precisely to our (and thus art's) relation to 'the body' that undergoes this tele-graphicisation:

'When you *can* simulate *in vitro* the explosion of the sun or the fertilization or gestation of a living creature, you have to decide what you *want*. And we just *don't know*. This foreclosure of ends is there in the principle of scanning. It has been dressed up in all all sorts of disguises: destination of man, progress, enlightenment, emancipation, happiness. Today the foreclosure appears naked. More knowledge and power, yes - but why, no.'⁴

Scanning, as now the universal rule of means (to knowledges (and thus powers)) that permanently defers ends (most notably 'community', its replacement being nothing more than the commonality all 'share' in being the subjects of tele-graphicisation), equalises everything at its own level of operational dissemination through information-communication. This means-only operativeness, occurring outside any end-responsive vision or project, anything other than ensuring the maintenance of the knowledge- production and its programmed dissemination, *generates a generalised but necessarily always imprecise reliance on mundane calculability*. Choices and decisions about priorities for 'action' (across every 'level' of social activity from state/institutional to interpersonal) are made through a 'weighing up' of vague probabilities derived from necessarily clashing sources of research data, themselves produced, under the aegis and cash of different and often conflicting interests accountable to no ruling authority on truth, ends or value. Hence the emergence of 'risk', in the absence of any culturally defining struggle over ends, as a kind of master-topic for the nonce in those theorising discourses committed to the empirical analysis of everyday life. Now that destiny has been vanquished we only face short term choices over more-or-less equalised value- differences that we are encouraged to resolve through resort to an accounting assessment of the relative profit or loss,

³ See J-F. Lyotard, 'The Inhuman', Stanford University, California, 1991, p. 53.

⁴ Op. cit., pp. 53 – 54.

the comfort or damage, that might result from the alternative choices. Where, then, does this plight of endlessness leave making-toward-art and its irrecusable involvement with embodied-becoming?

Performing's project is bound absolutely to and defined by the particularity of an 'end' - the arrival of the 'moment' when the gest that has been consuming it is abandoned in its hoped-for specificity, its difference as an exception to all the manifest and latent rules that may seem (to some interpreters after its abandonment) to have guided its emergence. The excess that might just release it as exception arises precisely from performing's movement-in-suspension between familiar knowables and that otherness which comes to it from an elsewhere unbeknownst. As argued earlier it is performing's transliterative renderings of this otherwise 'material' which bring it towards and into the not-quite-a-language which becomes the gest. Performing's strange movement turns around its commitment to effect an unaccountable rapprochement between the incommensurables that emerge within the conjunction it seeks to occupy - it renders its responses to, its experience of, being-suspended between feelings and thought, in the one-off of something-like-a-language that cannot be translated (through analogy, likeness, or whatever term for something held in common) into another language outside itself with which we may be familiar. And this transliterative rendering does not emerge from some methodic scanning work that, as the prescribed procedure of technoscience, comes from and returns to the abstractions of a thought which has to detach itself from its context-bound embodied-becoming. Rather its entire project is to ensure that it holds itself to what this synaesthetic amalgam offers, the experience of moving, yet suspended, within the conjunction.

Inevitably, through already acquired memories, desires, skills, and feelings-for (whatever), in its immovable orientation toward Art's Body, all performing explores its relation to this Body through its attachments to utterly specific materials and combinations (the conferrens...). It devotes its concentration of this embodied becoming as a whole to this exploration. In this very concentration it displays its otherness to the loosely assembled fragmented 'body-of-bits' that we 'know' and 'use' in the interrelations of technoscience with everyday problems of living, of getting by. Performing thus seeks to turn around through its becoming-embodied in order to generate its specific response to, its leaping off toward, Art's Body. Whatever the gathering matters through which its gest emerges, it is a response to the challenges it faces in selecting from and transliterating, in inflecting, through its chosen materials according to the shifting requirements of the emerging gest, the indelible traces marked on it in its passage through the complex conjunction of multiple sensings and thinkings. The gest's point in its particularity is to expose, and thus offer as art's point, the circumstantially-bound all-togetherness of embodied-becoming, that this 'becoming' is always a synaesthetic response to its being circumstantially embedded.

In order to leave traces of this embedded becoming in its gests performing has to effect a paradoxical scrutiny and exposure of its (and, as its embodiment, art's) plight under capitalised technoscience. To effect this exposure it has to actively engage and move through the pathos of the very abjection, the prone weakness, to which the machinery of technoscience and its productive marketing has reduced it. *Somehow, as this exposure, in its responsibility to Art's Body, it has to show itself as the other to the spare-part body of technoscience.* For it is the situated all-togetherness of its plight that is offered precisely as the other to the apart-ment of the parts so loosely assembled as 'the typical body' of technoscience, that abstract 'body' separated off from embodied-becoming's sensuously thoughtful immersion in circumstance, which, we are led to believe, we are well on the way

to 'knowing'. This generally distributed 'belief' constitutes the context of both the activity of performing and the organisationally controlled 'disposal' (as 'valued commodity' or 'waste-matter') of its gests when it abandons them.

If the contrast between technoscience's abstract body and Art's all-together Body is extreme, it is this very extremity that opens the gap into which which making-toward-art has to plunge in its out-leaping. For what performing has to confront, irrespective of the matters through which it gathers itself, is the way it can transfer crucial elements from its synaesthetically experienced abjectness into something that approaches but can never arrive at any known or knowable language. As this 'something', the emergent gest partakes of and seems to participate in language-constituting and -assembling activity; it does some things which, in their apparent recognisability, seem to attach it to the culturally known. It thus goes some way toward language and consequent accessibility and co-optability. Yet this advance is checked definitively by a withholding in which the language 'offer' is simultaneously withdrawn through the interruption of incisions (eruptive incidents within the gest's surfacing) that, while seeming to offer a multiplicity of potential experiences, remain stubbornly unavailable to any languages with which we are familiar. In other words, despite its advance toward culture with its seeming solicitation of responsive invitations to join, at its edge and in its retreating elusive 'heart' it resists absolutely appropriation by culture's interest-defined languages. For what performing ends up offering is then potential for experiences that are irreconcilable with our familiar languages. In what it deposits as the traces of its withdrawal from culture (with this withdrawal as its potential offer to respondents if they are prepared to follow) it hopes to reveal something of the inmost of its abjection, its most intimate, as that which cannot be appropriated, cannot be made to serve the interests of any conceptual synthesis. This unwordable, unrepresentable, something is what it hopes will carry it, and thus perhaps respondents, over to Art's Body as a tiny augments of the latter's bare almost-life.

Of course the prose of the world, as we saw with the writers considered earlier, can be drawn toward this most intimate in performing's quest to expose that which might be other to technoscience and commonsense. But it may be that the virtue of the arts for which prose is a secondary or ancillary resource lies precisely in their confronting the question of language's entwinement with embodiment through materials for which, while they are subject to multiple modes of ordering, shaping, mutation, and intensive investment, *there are no rules for translating what they offer back into the prose of everyday life*. They thus open onto embodied-becoming and the intimacy of the strange coming together of feeling and thinking through materialisations of this relation that already begin in zones aside from commonsense understanding, even though the latter, assisted by the discourses of aesthetics, develops extensive vocabularies of response for them. Senses of language inform performing in all these zones but they are not senses that are reconcilable with ordinary language. At 'best' they move in parallel, as overlapping, touching, expanding-contracting complements and supplements to the coming and going of ordinary language. They bear, embody, the intensities of different experiential possibilities.

But, in making-toward-art, it is precisely the conventional understandings of the 'role' and 'place' of these intensive possibilities in everyday life that are in question; they are what performing seeks to interrupt and divert out of culture and toward the over-there Body of Art. How each performer takes on the thoughtfully sensuous multiple that living-on just 'is' marks every element and process of each gest's idiosyncratic emergence from the life of

performing, for this is precisely its *telos*. Yet, in the aftermath of planetary info-culture, to turn elements of the non-prose (specifically visual-aural phenomena) gatherings out of the conventions that sustain their routine operation and use in the mounting of that culture and toward otherness is to face an unprecedented challenge. For the socio-technical machine that mounts the culture's routine reproduction develops and complexifies itself precisely through its appropriation and continuous revolutionary mobilisation of all media according to its own interests (its own sustenance and the long-term expansion and control of 'communicative' resources, both material and social). Necessarily beginning from within the seductive and ruling attractions of this machinery, performing faces the awesome challenge both of developing interruptive events (however small) and of secreting otherness - that which might be resistant to appropriation by the knowledge scanners. Perhaps the most it can hope for, as challenge, diversion, or interruption into otherness, is to have inserted into a gest's surfacing, tiny encrypted incidents that might just seduce respondents into that zone of ambivalent multiplicity necessary for the fall into art's not-yet.

But this hoped-for insertion can only come about in the course of performing's generation of its idiosyncratic not-quite-a-language, its development of a matter-specific cata-syntax whose emergence carries it through to the gest's abandonment. For it is this almost-locatable near-language just-off-syntax that will mark out each gest's potential as a shard that might be able to supplement Art's Body. It is within this idiosyncratic generation that the synaesthetic multiple, indelibly marking the experience of performing in its coursing through its ever-changing gest, will 'find, make, its way' into the gest through the whatever-transliterations it calls forth from the performer. And it is the experience of living through and within this synaesthetic multiple whose traces are deposited in the emergent gest in the course of the performer's struggle to get it 'out'. The finally and originally unbreachable intimacy of the relation between performance as intensive struggle and gest as its remnant is what insulates performing from appropriative responses wherever they seek to coopt the gest to an overarching synthesising frame for 'understanding'. As I have argued throughout, the aesthetic framing, through which performing and its gests are placed and valued, is geared entirely to and founds itself upon the 'life' of responding and not performing; that is why the discourses of aesthetics are effectively 'speechless' about the emergence and casting adrift toward Art's Body of the gests that are the remainders of performing's withdrawal from culture and its immersion in the multiple of its synaesthetic experience.

The Synaesthetic Split Between Performing and Responding

On the 'other side' of the divide the zones of response are deeply enmeshed in the fabric of everyday living, participating in its ordinary discourses, and operating under the controlled programming of the powerful interests that mount the routine sustenance of culture (the arts included). Of course the reception of and response to performing and its gests is also synaesthetically multiple. However, in its emergence from interests and desires that cannot be reconciled with those of performing, and under conditions (structures and processes of relating) organised around the institutionally projected 'needs' of response (to appropriate each gest to 'interpretive understanding', to 'meaning', for example), the multiple of aesthetic response enacts, circumscribes and inhabits a quite different zone to that of performing. The independence of response's concerns can be seen clearly enough from the necessary specificity of its embodied relation to art's gests. And this specificity is rendered unequivocal and explicit in what making-toward-art, by way of the 'fiction's' telling, requires of response.

The writers considered earlier in ‘To Leap Fictively...’ ‘took on’ different aspects of their and art’s relation to technoscience, but, as ‘prose fictions’, their gesticulations could only ‘take on’ embodied-becoming as a ‘theme’ for their writing. For the relation between writing-reading through ordinary language and embodiment at the point of its reception (that is, in the zone precisely of response) is restricted primarily (though not absolutely...) to the relation between what the eyes recognise (‘know’), memorising, imaginative thought, and the ‘inner ear’s’ silent (usually...) revoicing of the text’s spaced-words. The only haptic involvement (with the exception of the blind reading by the touch of the ‘braille’ text) is in the ancillary movements required for supporting the text and turning its pages, or, in the case of the computer, pressing the keys and moving/clicking the cursor to activate instructions. ‘Everything’ has to pass by way of the visual recognition and following of the sequenced words, although for this ‘everything’ to occur we have to recognise that reading anything is necessarily embedded in a context where ‘supports’ for reading (bodily comfort-discomfort and distractions) are always relative and variable. Context-binding conditions thus ensure that reading is synaesthetic, but they cannot shift the absolute primacy of the eyes-memory relation.

In the other arts, however, the combinations of embodied senses, imaginative thought’s memory-work, and contextualising conditions vary enormously, especially for those relations to the gesticulations which are dependent upon access to carefully controlled public spaces (obviously the ‘performing arts’ occur almost exclusively as socially shared events). The quality of the intimacy of any respondent’s relation to a gesticulation-as-performance is always going to be a function of the technical management of the synaesthetic contexts in which the performance is offered; this moves from the most fundamental physical conditions (heating, lighting) to the least tangible or accountable elements of shared response (mood, judgment). Wherever response occurs there is an unavoidable all-at-onceness about the synaesthetic multiple, which, in its continuous movement, prevents any but the most passing separation of particular senses from the multiple within which the performance makes its way. And perhaps the least separable is the quality of the social relations that defines every art-responsive experience (including the reading of poetry and fiction) in settings (concert hall, dance hall, opera house, cinema, park, street, public gallery, private gallery-shop, cafe, private residence, and so on), whether public or private, where the gesticulation is performed for an audience.

The embodied-becoming of any individual respondent’s relation to a gesticulation in an explicitly social setting infuses the experience of that relation with context-specific elements that can neither be predicted, recovered, nor repeated. Like it or not, one’s response entails, and is partially defined by, participation in a social event. Embodied response thus necessarily includes its own synaesthetic suffusion by material social conditions completely outside its control. In each of the arts every sense is in play and continuously entwined with thought as embodied-becoming passes through the performance-event. Response is always plurally synaesthetic through being context-bound and thus beholden to circumstance; but in every context and gesticulation-relation it has to develop, operate, and endlessly adjust, an implicit hierarchy of sense-thought relations in order to ‘follow’ the idiosyncratic internal dynamic of each gesticulation. Usually it will be seeing and hearing that vie for ‘control’ of the relation to the gesticulation and set up their own reciprocal dynamic. But this can be interrupted and re-directed at any time by incidents in both the gesticulation and the context of response and how they interact.

Thus while performing and responding are both plurally synaesthetic, they are separated absolutely by what brings this sensuous multiple into play and how it shapes their relation to

context-bound experience. Performing has to generate from the disparities that surround it, that 'come' to it, and that it can dredge up from 'behind' and 'around' it – what it has passed and is passing 'through' – something that it draws out into a sequence-to-come; it casts this thing off in the passing hope that its sequencing possibilities will indeed be followed. Responding can only follow what is in some sense already 'there', what unrolls always seemingly just 'ahead' of its attending. The two 'sides' to the conjunctive-disjunctive embodied-becoming of art through its gests confirm their incommensurability without end.

In the meantime the encultured 'body', delivered to all of us as 'our'⁵ body, continues to be worked over by technoscience in the interests of 'work' itself as we now live by it – the 'body' that is being prepared for its cultural 'responsibilities' as an alert and ready to respond active receiver and sender of a plurality of informational modes, ready to participate in the productive flow through which culture maintains itself. Under the aegis of this flow these 'bodies' go their ways quite aside from the exigencies of performing's plight. When they do occasionally come upon performing and its gests it is necessarily through the terms on which the latter have been absorbed and re-presented by the machinery of culture. All performing can do is to try to confront the consequences of this delivery according to the competing demands of the circumstances in which it seeks to find and expose itself in its quest of making-toward-art. For this is the 'body' that performing challenges itself to depart from in its search to find ways of exposing the synaesthetic multiple, the strange all-together, that seems to it to bring off the through-forming of its embodied-becoming. To take the 'per' of per-forming as the clue to follow, as it turns 'through' the relating of its situated becoming (its search for ways of revealing how it goes-through (life) precisely as the synaesthetic multiple), would be to show performing as simultaneously a search both for the lost 'body' (perhaps those still findable remnants of the post-pleistocenian body that is continually being transformed (worked over) in its transition from its precedent embodied-becomings) and for the body-yet-to-come (that hoped-for 'fullness', embodied-becoming realising all the potentials of its synaesthetic multiple, that can only be borne as a latent and vague promise within our current technoscientificallly-modelled and work-defined 'body').

Disintegrating Boundaries : the Singular Gest as Commodity and the Fragility of Medium's Relation to Embodied-Becoming

Perhaps this ceaselessly moving conglomerate of felt-thought, with which performing now tries to come to terms and to find ways of tracing in its gests, is a gloss for the lost-and-still-to-come embodied-becoming, for which we have neither vocabulary nor syntax, other than the halting fragments that the arts generate for us in the course of their leaping away from where we are now toward the Body that we can never quite grasp. But this doubled body-search now finds itself unavoidably caught up in and having to struggle with the real effects (on all our 'bodies') of the machinery that defines and controls culture's coming-and-going and sends us and performing on our and its way. Some performers confront its implications by taking on such machinery and trying to turn their performing through, and hopefully beyond, some of its strictures, while others try to isolate their performing zone from some of the effects of its controlling gestures.

⁵ Though the sense of personal 'ownership' implied in the 'our' may have to be taken as a routine fiction of the everyday life of 'the body' under the current state of politics as (still, just, and in spite of the boundary-transcending networks of electronic data transmission) a state-politics in which at any moment (always claimable as 'exceptional') the state can claim and dispose of whatever body it 'needs'. For a discussion of these issues see, G. Agamben, 'State of Exception', University of Chicago, London, 2005.

As performers' passions and interests, always acutely responsive to seismic shifts in the very processes of representation that infiltrate and define the performing situation, search for ways of taking on and getting through the challenges posed by these changes, we have already seen that 'medium' as a taken-for-granted category and condition for performing has been displaced. Traditional boundaries between media, sustained by habit, training, taste, and institutional demands, are displaced by a co-gathering involvement with materials that turns around and through each performer's own embodied-becoming in its being-in-between the thoughtful and the sensuous. Performing 'is' the transliterative marking out of the experience of trying to survive in and as the conjunction of these incommensurables in the course of making for Art's Body. Passing through, it seeks to expose, as its materialised putting forth, the specificity of this experience. *This passing through (embodied-becoming turning through itself as it puts itself in question) is what has displaced 'medium' for performing.* Not only is medium now, under the rule of the machinery of generalised representation, defining the institutional condition of response to performing as a matter for aestheticised knowledge, but, reciprocally, in leaping away over there to try to sever itself off from this medium's rule, performing co-gathers and materialises itself as just embodied-becoming turning through itself and its contexted relations. Thus embodied-becoming, as both performing's topic ('content'?) and its resource (form-as-bearer?), focussing exclusively on its leap away toward Art's distant Body, suspends medium's traditional hold over it. As a zone of multiplicity - the co-gathering of the thoughtfully sensuous with materials - it finds that it no longer needs to live by the knowledge-ruled boundary constrictions of media as supposedly neutral and separable carriers ordered and managed by the machinery of representation.

This displacement of medium is a defining feature of contemporary performing in both the still predominantly 'visual' arts and music where boundary-conventions disappear under the weight of performers' co-gathering under the potential of multiplicity. As with the writers considered earlier, the question that defines performing's project (whether and how Art's Body might be sustained in the face of the absorption and mounting of art as a component of the info-spectacle) generates just this multiple response from performers. Whatever is experienced as gest-relevant in the course of performing's contextual responses can be drawn into the co-gathering - *providing only that transliteration can find ways of rendering its disparate fragments in the quasi-syntax of its almost-a-language.* In this movement performing's turn through its embodied-becoming exposes, begins to make patent to itself, very different potentials for its gests in their relation both to culture's constricting demands and to its leap towards Art's Body.

Performing now gathers itself, tries to hold itself together, through the relations it sustains between its material resources (recognised and experienced now in their direct emergence from and representation by the dynamic of technoscientific work) and an embodied-becoming focussed on Art's Body. In very different ways the gests and approaches to performing considered briefly in the following chapter explore and seek to expose some of the consequences, for both performing and everyday life, of embodiment's unavoidable intrication with technoscience; they show making-toward-art as an occasion for experiencing, aside from discursive knowledge and commonsense conventions, quite other dimensions of this intrication. Their point, through their interruptions of representation's media-conventions, is to offer, as matters for experience (as a contemplative feeling-out), the possibility that the matters that matter for the sustenance of Art's Body in this intrication maybe completely 'invisible' to, foreign to, commonsense understanding (always itself fortified by the established 'knowing' languages of response). And these may be matters of

the greatest intimacy, matters whose exposure can reveal the ways that *broaching intimacy itself, our most 'inmost', invariably raises and confounds questions about the borders, edges, and thresholds not only of media but of all our relating (to 'self', others, things ('place(s)') and processes ('our passing'))*. To explore embodied-dependency from outside the cultural 'givens' is to open onto regions of sensitivity quite foreign to the routine rhetorics of description and evidence. It is to take 'the body' that is continuously being re-constituted and sent on its way under calculated production and telegraphic positioning - its representation as that which is given (to be 'taken as read') and assembled always just *for the time being* - off and away toward the elsewhere of Art's untouchable unassignable Body.

Under modernity and its 'afterwards' the so-called 'visual'⁶ arts, precisely because they are embedded in and thus seek to relate their response to the endless techno-socio-innovations redefining the 'situation' (plight?) of 'seeing' (what it is now taken to 'be' and 'do' in its fusion of the 'what' that is seen with the 'how' of its seeing) to their drive to make-toward-art, crystallise and expose the absolute split that defines the crisis of performing across the arts. For the gest incorporated into and handed down by 'tradition' (including now the modern tradition and its afterward), the gest that remains the *telos* for performing now, and still in the face of technoscience's multiplication of the machinery of mass copying, is the unique 'object-event' whose possibility of affiliation with Art's Body is 'grounded' in the particularity of its 'difference'. It is the performance-event-object for which there is no 'pre-text', no advance script to be put through its paces as the performance itself. At the same time, in its being freed from the powers that fixed its singularity within certain spaces and rituals, under modernity it has been transformed into a supremely mobile object. Free of all attachments except that brought about by its insertion into the market's exchange process (its appropriation as now commodity-object) *it can go anywhere at any time*. And under representation the transfer of its simulacrum occurs in an instant - in 'no time at all' it can 'be' everywhere (where there is a receptive reproductive machine). How different from the gests shown in the salons, academies, and galleries of the high-days of modernity, let alone the fixity of earlier paintings such as Duccio's 'Maesta' with its intricate ties to ritual, power, and the symbolism of its specific 'place'⁷.

Before everything else, what performing strives to guarantee about this gest, in its reception as just this singularity, is that it bears (shows and exposes) the marks and traces of the performer's embodied-becoming: the gest is the bearer of remnants of the performer's 'touch', the haptically registered transformation of matters, that almost allows respondents to imaginatively 'be' in, to share something (unknowable...) of, the fold of the performer's embodied performance. *But, of course, this possible 'sharing' can only go by way of the detour of the transliterated almost-language that is the only remnant of the performing 'experience'*. The gest is thus a reliquary of the now passed and lost (though she/he may be

⁶ 'So-called' because, for performing's gests and the response they solicit, while emerging from the sensuous multiple of performing's synaesthetic experiencing and activities, while 'seeing' is their necessary though far from sufficient condition, they necessarily engage (as offered in the preceding discussions of 'medium'), in the course of this contextually- and time-bound seeing, other senses. For embodied-becoming 'itself' is simultaneously both performing's 'goal' and its constituent activity. All 'visual-art-performers' know now, *and seek to treat as a virtue and resource*, that seeing is intimately intertwined with and dependent upon all the other senses and movements of thought. Their performing is precisely the exploratory celebration and making singularly patent of the delights and conundra of this attempted fusion.

⁷ On its completion the 'Maesta' was borne through the streets of Sienna in a celebratory procession to huge popular acclaim on the way to its installation in its destination - a place of worship.

still be very much alive...) performer. In the culture's response it is grasped (literally) and re-presented by the institutions managing 'tradition' as *the* 'document' of the unrepeatable intimacy of the 'moments' (the lost 'presence') of its (original, authentic...) emergence. For us, still (usually...), nothing else will do. Only when this attribution of origin has, as a condition of its reception, been ascertained and hopefully guaranteed by the technical knowledge tests is attention turned towards the conventions of aesthetic judgment (still under the sway of the supposed *sensus communis* that is taken to acquiesce (or not) instantly to the thing's 'beauty') that will deliver it to its 'place' within the unending 'series' of (now traditionalised) gests. In this process authenticity of origination (authorship as singularity, difference, initerability) is eventually elided into and through judgments of taste and thus 'value'. But all this happens in the course of that devastating 'movement' (absolutely invisible and occurring at immeasurable speeds) following the 'moment' of a gest's abandonment by the performer. For attribution and taste-judgment can only occur in the course of and as intimate contributors to an absolutely alien process that is the bringing of the gest to market and its subsequent being sucked up into and whirled around in the phantasmagoric cloud of sign-images that circulate throughout, and thus 'condition',⁸ everyday 'seeing'.

In the exchange which has to 'take place' (thus appropriating the place of the gest as such) for the gest to be 'seen', to have its chance of a 'life', we know all too well that the world of value is turned upside-down-inside-out. In becoming-commodity the gest is ruled, owned, represented, sent on its way, according to its exchange value. And the price is always right - the price rules, forever, even though the monetary value at which the gest 'changes hands' (the essential haptic in action again but this time marking the 'thing' so subtly and invisibly, carrying it off and away, that we can never quite reconstruct what has gone on or the possible effects of this re-inscription as 'commodity' in this handing over...) has nothing whatsoever to do with what any one might experience in 'front' of the thing *were it able to be free of its price tag*. Which, of course, it and we are constitutionally incapable of doing. For this tag is both the infiltrating container and the invisible 'heart' that bears the gest across to us. Having known all this, resignedly, perhaps, for aeons, we try as both performers and respondents to just get on with relating to the gest as 'intimately' as we can, though the possibility of 'direct' intimacy has already been absolutely withdrawn from us as we have to pass through the veil of price-as-value 'to get in touch' with it. Whether as performers anticipating the upcoming fate or as respondents already borne along within this inescapable but inexplicable tension, the transparent veil interrupts the intimacy of our 'seeing-feeling'. We proceed within the pretence that we can suspend, have already suspended, its (worst? best?) effects, and relate to 'the thing itself', to the 'presence' of the initerable singularity of its body-marked body. Whereas, silently and inscrutably the gest's singularity has already been copied, doubled up, by this non-thing, its perfectly developed but invisible and abstract negative veiling that haunts, shadows and rules its every move, and especially its moves within the constructed and managed series through which it has been coopted, in however marginal a way, into the institution of 'tradition'.

It is in this way that the materially singular gest of the visual arts, as the materialised remainder and reminder of a one-off performance has, in the course of its commodification,

⁸ 'Conditioning' here is to be taken in its most 'literal' sense as a 'toning' or a 'massaging' (and thus supposedly an 'improving') of 'the body' (or its constituents such as 'hair') through treatment techniques derived from specific knowledge-zones with their specialist discourses.

now drawn us, for we are all willy-nilly participants, inexorably both in anticipation and *post facto* into the circumstance that defines performing across the arts. Once the valuing, and thus the ‘placing’, of the arts’ gests were separated definitively from the sites of traditional power, which had previously appropriated and controlled the ruling symbolic values (including the possession and manipulation of the arts’ ‘eventing’), they were rendered as ‘available’ as any other possible commodity for appropriation and development as exchangeable goods-bads, services-disservices, by predatory ‘interests’ (those with access to capital and the knowledges and transforming powers of the technical forces of production). And while these technical forces, steadily taken over and ruled by a technoscience that has now, in its productive-reproductive drive, expanded way beyond all traditional institutions of power (including those to which we still cling), may have contributed, through their revolutionising of the means of reproduction (and thus ‘copying’), to the loss of the singular art gest’s ‘aura’ (its actual and symbolic attachment to a particular place with its defining rituals), this is surely a secondary adjunct to its being cast adrift into the market. For the market’s routine functioning - the appearance and availability of its processes and products - has become inextricably intertwined with and absolutely dependent upon a technicised representation whose machinery constructs and effects the controlled distribution of knowledge-as-information through the info-spectacle’s communicative ‘resources’.

This highly mobile and volatile knowledge-machinery ‘frames’ us, though it careers away from all frames with which we are familiar, to operate more as a self-re-constituting disappearing fractal boundary that edges everything we do, but fuzzily. Caught up in it, each one of us effects, bears, and maintains this edgy fuzziness. For, operating at inhuman speeds to produce the instant availability of its monitoring data, it holds and represents that spectrum of human-becoming (from the phantasmagoria of desire to the second-by-second price of ‘futures’) deemed ‘relevant’ (and what now is not?) to marketing. And what we have to remember, in efforts to ‘place’ ourselves in relation to it (as it ‘places’ us ceaselessly), is that *it is absolutely beyond control*. Or at least the controls that are operated are always local, context-bound, and necessarily short-lived (in planetary terms). The only thing that would stop it would be a perfectly coordinated global power-cut, just the sort of ‘event’ savoured by the entertainment arm of the info-machinery in its multiple stagings (image-text-sound productions) of dystopian ‘disaster’ - imagining ‘the end of the world as we know it’ as a good night out.

Thus, in the course of this inexorable and now absolute conversion (the market’s being re-marketed under the eye of a capitalised and now capitalising technoscience that operates ‘outside’ the frames and relations upon which we routinely rely) a revolutionised and puzzlingly different ‘object-without-precedent’ began to surface and be circulated. And in spite of leaving its mark on, even perhaps helping to define, through the confounding strangeness of its appearing, modernity’s heyday, nobody quite knew what to do with it. Nor do we still now, though many forms of institutional appropriation, having managed to convert it into something that seems to reflect and thus represent their ‘interests’, seek to convince us otherwise. Now carefully selected from the uncountable multiple that seek to offer themselves as making-toward-art, a minority is conserved, converted into exchangeability, and represented to us under the label ‘art’. Some of the ‘given’ thing-events that appear through this label face and confound us, as both performers and potential respondents, with the challenge of their conundrum. For, in spite of the thickness and complexity of the representations within which they are embedded and that both put them in their place (thus telling us how to take them) and seek to integrate their represented offer with their

commodity status, some appear to be obdurately indifferent to all that representation throws at them. While not resisting this representing work (how could they in their abject weakness?), they remain sealed off, isolated, irreconcilable with the characteristics conventionally used to 'recognise' and make judgments about commodities. For the very 'properties' of 'things' that make exchanging money for them in the market place seem so routine are entirely lacking; so absent are they that the kind of relations the representing work points us toward, or which we might want to have with them on the basis of what we are used to looking for in 'such' things, are pre-empted by this lack. Indeed the more we try to approach the things through representation and familiarity the more intransigent does their retreat become. It is as if the lack that seems to render them unaccommodatable is rather their defining 'quality'. In which case the potential for any relation with this lacking-thing might have to have at the ready something other than a 'positive' or a 'negative' as substitutes for what it was without. It might, for example, have to explore possible ways of sharing in this lacking, of itself falling short of defining itself according to positive 'attributes', of participating in the undoing, the de-creative falling-back-through, out of which 'event' the thing may have emerged.

Perhaps what allows the lack to be glimpsed as the condition both for its possible leap away and for the way it partially (always only partially...) manages to separate itself from its commodity-being, while remaining firmly set within it, are the attributes we conventionally take for granted in relating to any thing, but especially to things represented as already commodities. For this thing, which can 'survive' - its literal living-on - only by being endlessly overlaid and permeated by the know-how of cultural interests, begins (and most likely ends) in and as its 'withoutness'. Defining the thing as that which, in lacking any definition, is already other (both less and more) than a spatially and temporally fixable thing for some (any) knowledge-interest, invites us to 'see it' (but is 'it' an 'it' other than discursively, and may it not be engaging more, perhaps much more, than just 'seeing'...?) appearing, and thus somehow making its presence felt, through its display of that which it does not (nor ever could) possess. For it is a thingless thing, a not-quite-object, without an 'identity', without a function (use), answering to no definable locatable already socially articulated 'desire' let alone 'need', without clear attachment or attraction to specific social groups (re-calling again Klee's 'the people are not with us'), and seemingly entirely lacking in (and perhaps even declaring this through its up-front militantly pacific resistance to) any knowledge-base (let alone the latter's associated specialist discourse). And it is precisely this last lack that, in the very manifesting of its constitutive weakness, defeats all those appropriating forays that would enable its cooptation to the emergent and increasingly dominant market-defining forces - the machinery of representation - of capitalised technoscience. This is surely why it constitutes such a troubling 'guest' in the academy where it is allotted its place alongside collegial discourses for which the routine assessment and measurement of daily performance according to criteria of methodic knowledge production are the founding means to longer-term survival.