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The Sinthome/Z-Point Relation or Art as Non-Schizoanalysis

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Prologue: Air Time

Vito Acconci looks at his image in a mirror. He addresses the reflection and speaks about a relationship that has gone wrong: 'I'm talking to you so that I can see myself the way you see me … I'm acting something out for them'. His words become cruel. He says 'I' but also 'you' and 'them'. As Rosalind Krauss observes, Acconci utters pronouns that Roman Jakobson terms shifters, for the meaning or content of these pronouns is contingent, depending on who says 'I' and what or who is being referred to as 'you' or 'them' (1997: 196–8). Acconci's words and their attendant referents slip and fail to knot: 'I' and 'you' and 'them' are all at sea … they drift every which way. We know of Acconci's confessional discussion with his mirror-image through the documentation of the 1973 performance Recording Studio From Air Time*, acted out in isolation at Sonnabend Gallery. The artist's performance is re-presented as an audio-video work: Acconci's image is seen on a monitor, his voice is heard through speakers. The performance and recording might be thought of as some kind of strange therapy – for Acconci, but also for us – but it isn't, or it's somehow more than that.* Recording Studio From Air Time *is precisely a* presentation *in which 'I' and 'you' and 'them'* collapse.

Introduction: 1 + 1 = 3 (or 4, 5, 6 … n)

Our contribution to this volume on *Schizoanalysis and the Visual Arts* follows directly from our collaborative art practice, the performative fiction *Plastique Fantastique,* and might be understood as a meta-reflection on – or metamodelling

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of – some of the experiments and gambits of the latter. In general, with this essay we aim to contribute to a thinking of art practice as itself a form of schizo-analysis or, as we hope to make clear in what follows, a *non*-schizoanalysis. In proposing the latter we follow François Laruelle, who attaches the prefix 'non' to philosophy to designate forms of thinking that use the 'tools' and concepts of philosophy for non-philosophical ends. Similarly, our proposal for art as non-schizoanalysis signals our reservations in positioning art as a therapeutics and thus also our reluctance to transfer Félix Guattari's analytic framework (our essay, in the main, concerns itself with Guattari's solo writings) directly to contemporary art practice. In the first instance, art practice as non-schizoanalysis recognizes that Guattari's schizoanalysis is concerned with certain clinical and ecological issues and problems demanded by the therapeutic and socio-political contexts Guattari worked within, whereas the experiments of contemporary art practice do not necessarily involve such responsibilities. For art practice, as we understand it, rarely has therapeutic designs and intentions *per se*. Secondly, a non-schizoanalysis would experiment with the insights and approaches of schizoanalysis without fully signing up to the ethico-aesthetic paradigm or orientation espoused by Guattari (and to a lesser extent by Guattari and Gilles Deleuze in their collaborations).

In fact, following this particular attitude to the conjunction schizoanalysis *and* art, we are proposing that many art practices (from the inception of the avant-garde onwards) do not produce new subjectivities as such, but rather operate as the presentation of a certain *scene* (of rupture) for others to engage and experiment with. In so far as this goes, in our own practice, we are concerned with the production of avatars and images but also with the gathering, mobilization and *holding* of what we understand as points of *collapse*. In what follows, our proposal for art as non-schizoanalysis draws directly upon Guattari's discussion of Z-points (in *Chaosmosis*) and, more indirectly, from Deleuze and Guattari's notion of diagrams as presentations of points of collapse within signifying regimes. However, we also look to the psychoanalytical modelling of Jacques Lacan as laid out in the later seminars and especially the development of a theory of knots of subjectivity bound by a *sinthome* (symptom). In approaching contemporary art through such Guattari–Lacan assemblages, we would also maintain that the theoretical workings out that follow are themselves a form of art practice in so far as analytic material is explored through the drawing of composite diagrams and the syntheses of different schema. (It hardly needs adding that the expanded field of visual art now goes well beyond the production of gallery-bound objects to include a whole host of different practices.)

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One further point by way of introduction. The essay was itself written between the two of us and, as such, evidences a certain tension that is indicative of each of our particular perspectives and competences. Although this could not simply be articulated as a dialectic of schizoanalysis and psychoanalysis, or Guattari versus Lacan (indeed, the essay intends a hybrid assemblage of a kind), there is a sense of two threads running throughout our writing (sometimes more, sometimes less successfully knotted together). The threads might be characterized (abstractly) as production and contingency. In fact, to say it once more, we believe it is the holding of these two together in what might be called a pattern of *minimum consistency* that characterizes art as non-schizoanalysis and, indeed, our own art practice as *Plastique Fantastique.*

Metamodelization

Chaosmotic knots

In the essay 'Schizoanalytic Metamodelisation' (in *Chaosmosis*) Guattari offers a distinct articulation of what he sees as the four ontological functions that determine any given 'discursive system' or 'refrain of ontological affirmation' (2005: 60). The organizational schema he utilizes owes much to Hjelmslev, from whom the expression/content framework is taken (and which is Guattari's response to the Saussurean signifier/signified framework determinant in Lacanian modelizations of discursive structures).

In the schema overleaf (Figure 11.1) any given being – or enunciative assemblage – is constituted across four distinct realms. Here, Guattari makes an important distinction between the real and the possible. As far as the real goes, F denotes the actual constitution of any given entity within space and time, while T denotes the chaosmosis out of which that entity has emerged (and, crucially, towards which it tends in a movement of its own dissolution). On the possible side, Φ denotes the actual machinic nature of the entity – its autopoietic and allopoietic character as it were, whilst U denotes the virtual 'universes of reference' or 'incorporeal complexity' that are available to, or opened up by, this machinic discursivity. The importance of this schema for us is that F-Φ is the sphere of production (actual and discursive), whereas T-U is the register of contingency (virtual and non-discursive) – and hence what Guattari (1995) is modelling, in our terms, is a set of relations and processes that is also a particular production–contingency assemblage.

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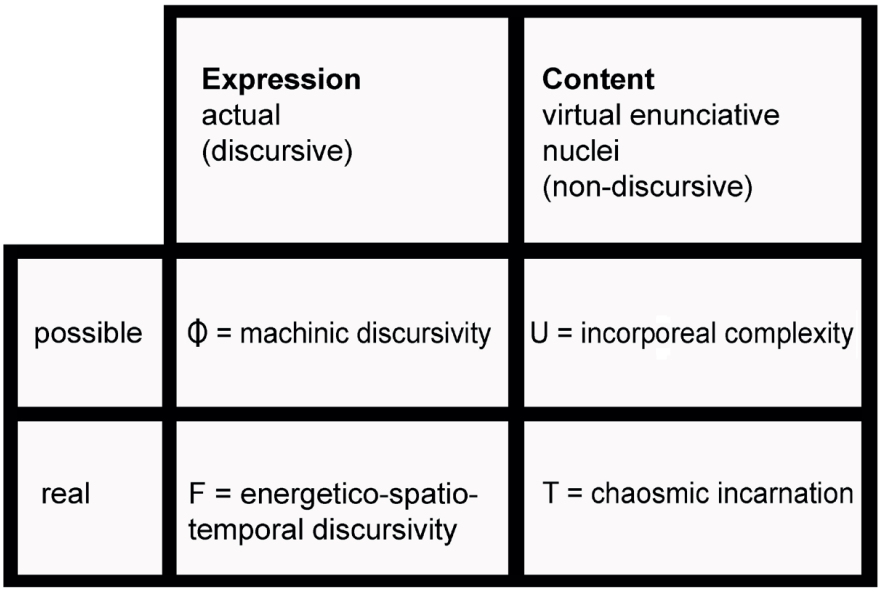

Figure 11.1 The assemblage of the four ontological functions (from *Chaosmosis*).

The schema given in *Chaosmosis* is a more condensed and worked through version of the one laid out in the sprawling *Schizoanalytic Cartography*, where Guattari points to the particular processional nature of his own modelling, which he pitches against what he sees as limited (and ultimately moribund) Lacanian formularizations. As he puts it towards the beginning of that book, in the section on 'Analytic Cartographies':

> … rather than returning constantly to the same, supposedly foundational, structures, the same archetypes, the same 'mathemes', schizoanalytic meta-modeling will choose to map compositions of the unconscious, contingent topographies evolving with social formations, technologies, arts, sciences, etc. (2013: 22)

Schizoanalytic Cartographies is not an easy read, not least because it is Guattari's most inventive and experimental attempt to free himself from the afore-mentioned Lacanian formularizations and thus involves a dizzying array of new terminology and novel schema. *Chaosmosis*, written a few years later, is less marked by this and thus might be said more adequately to lay out a specific schizoanalytic framework as a challenge to Lacanian psychoanalysis, although its is certainly less technical, analytically speaking. Guattari's critique of Lacanian mathemes, found in both books, declares his dissatisfaction with Lacan's privileging of structure over forces (or contingencies), a privileging found specifically in the diagrams of Lacan's Four Discourses:

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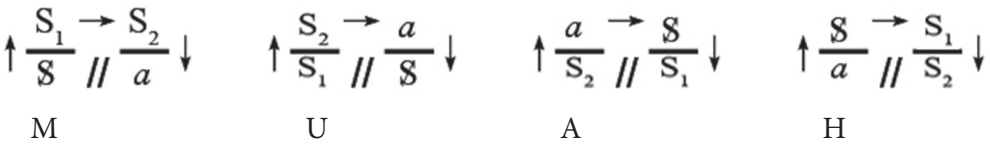

Figure 11.2 Lacan's Four Discourses of the Master, University, Analyst and Hysteric.

However, importantly, it can be said that forces *are* inscribed within Lacan's diagrams that are not simply mathemes (lessons or structures) but, indeed, are referred to by Lacan as 'machines on paper' (2007: 49). Lacan's definition relates to the way in which four elements – S1 (primary or little ego), S2 (Other or knowledge), $ (barred subject) and object *a* (the trace of partial objects in the symbolic) – move through and occupy different positions within the matheme itself, producing the structures – or precisely discourses – of the Master, University, Hysteric and Analyst (through rotation clockwise or anti-clockwise). To add more detail: the elements below the two horizontal bars are unconscious aspects of a given structure and themselves influence (but also result from) the relation of the elements above the two bars. Simply put, various forces, productions and impasses inscribed in the mathemes index the influence of the four elements on each other – all of which animate the machinic operation of the matheme. In a further definition, Lacan explains that each quarter of the matheme has a specific function or plays a specific part within the structure:

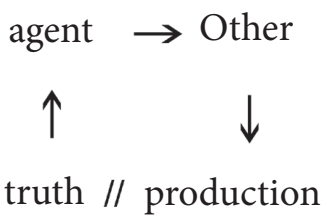

Figure 11.3 Positions within Lacan's matheme.

The top left quarter of the machine is the position of agent, which intervenes in the sphere of the Other, located in the top right quarter (sometimes designated as work or knowledge). In the bottom right quarter of the machine is production (that which is produced or lost as surplus jouissance through the intervention of the agent into the sphere of the Other – the price of the relation as it were). Lastly, truth (that is, the unconscious myth) of the subject or discourse is located in the bottom left quarter of the machine. While there is no relation between truth and production (or surplus jouissance), the influence of the unconscious (truth) on the agent – the unconscious agent of a myth – pulses through the machine.

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These operations can be understood as being driven by *pathemes* (the affective capacities of human exchange and interaction). Or, put differently, diagrammed in the mathemes is the influence or affect of the unconscious *on* subjectivity. Despite this, what is important for Lacan here is how a subject's structure can be communicated through discourse *and* on a symbolic level. Perhaps, for Guattari, we could say that this privileging of the symbolic is a kind of foreclosure (in reverse), and thus that Guattari's analytic contribution is, first, to stress the significance of the pathic, and second, to (re)inscribe a zone of contingency or chaosmosis within discursive structures, something that Lacan can be said to elide.

The crucial point here is, however, twofold. On the one hand, it seems to us that Lacanian modelizations, although privileging symbolic structures, are themselves processional (in so far as the mathemes are machines, productive of and, in turn, animated by pathemes). On the other, although Guattari certainly privileges the processional and creative over the scientific (hence the ethico-aesthetic paradigm), he nevertheless relies on mathematical formularization or frameworks (grids) – that is, mathemes or lessons – at least of a certain kind. Guattari does claim (in *Schizoanalytic Cartographies*) that the 'intensive indices, the diagrammatic operators' of his schema 'do not have any universal character' (2013: 35), but then they must, as it were, be able to communicate inter-subjectively in order that they have an analytic function. They must be at least generally applicable across different subjectivities, or present generic ontological functions for any given enunciative assemblage. Guattari's inscriptions of chaosmosis, however experimental and processual, must have a relation to, if not a purchase on, the sphere of discourse and its structures.

In fact, it is our contention that *both* Lacanian and Guattarian modelizations diagram a relation of production–contingency (patheme–matheme) but with different emphases, and a different casting of unconscious and affective registers. In Lacan's mathemes the unconscious is barred. It is the truth of the subject – the myth of prohibition or the holes in discourse that mark the Real of human relations. For Guattari the unconscious is machinic and productive. It is chaosmosis itself, the multiplicity of forces (human and non-human) that allows for, but also threatens, any given subjectivity.

What this means, however, is that Lacan's mathemes maintain a certain specificity in relation to the production of different subjects (not least in the way in which the mathemes imply a large number of subject positions (or discourses), some of which Lacan himself did not map out). Indeed, a criticism might be made that Guattari's grid cannot account for how *different* (historical, cultural, desiring) subjectivities are produced. On the other hand, the Lacanian

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mathemes can be said to be enclosed machines, returning to, or repeating, the same positions and relations, with no connection to an 'outside' (which Lacan would have thought too metaphysical an idea perhaps, or certainly not something that could be communicated in discourse). We suggest that these problems and differences might be explored through an experimental metamodelization, one that does not necessarily lead to an accord between the two different models, but, rather, experimentally forces relations between them, and, like a collage, leaves joins, incongruent relations and abstractions visible (thus allowing for a productive and generative presentation of the different models in question). In our first metamodelization then, we place Lacan's matheme within Guattari's assemblage of the four ontological functions after the latter grid has been rotated ninety degrees anti-clockwise:

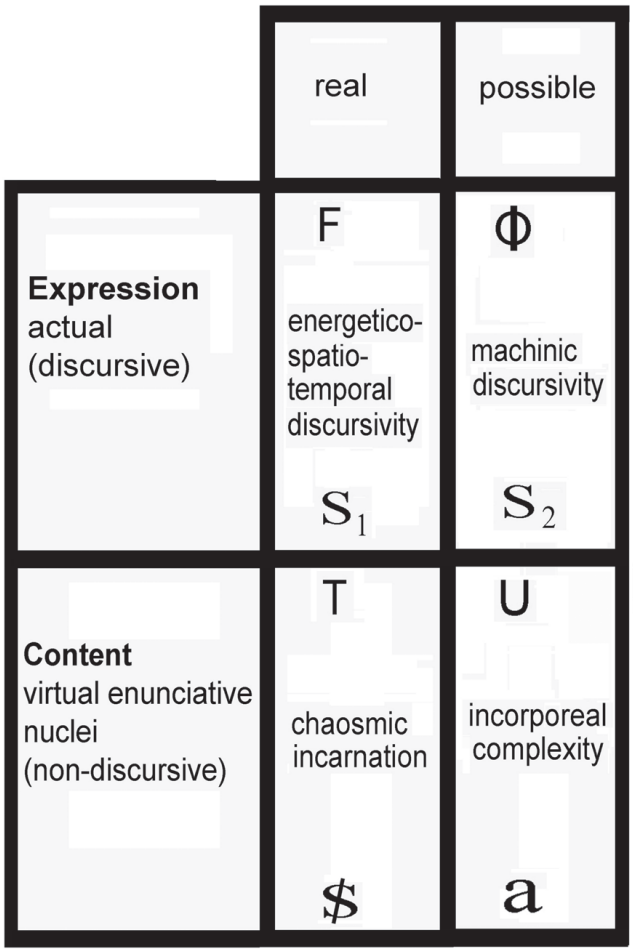

Figure 11.4 Lacan–Guattari metamodelization 1.

Without doubt this new assemblage/schema is somewhat brutal in so far as we are superimposing something of a dialectical machine (Lacan's matheme) onto an abstract machine (Guattari's assemblage). Indeed, affinities are outnumbered by incongruent comparisons in our metamodelization. The most significant of these is presented through the placing of Lacan's barred subject ($) in the bottom left quadrant of Guattari's grid. Nevertheless, and although T (chaosmic incarnation) is in no way equitable with $ (the barred subject), our metamodelization does allow for a pointed reflection on the non-discursive or unconscious functions of both Guattari's assemblage and Lacan's schema. We suggest that just as $, for Lacan, is in the position of truth – as an unconscious influence on the relation S1 → S2 (producing symbolic order but also threatening breakdown) – similarly, T is the truth of any enunciative assemblage – that from which any given entity is produced, but also that which threatens their dissolution.

Following on from the above, a perhaps more contentious gambit would be to begin to rotate F, Φ, U and T through the four quadrants of Guattari's assemblage (and even to compare the relations of real and possible expression, and real and possible content with the position of agent, Other, production and truth in Lacan's mathemes). In this way, we might begin to address the issue we pointed to earlier, concerning the limitations of Guattari's assemblage in accounting for how different kinds of subjectivitity are produced.

Returning to Figure 11.4, and despite our recognition of a discrepancy between Lacan's $ or barred subject (the myth of prohibition produced by the impossibility of human relations, registered as gaps or ruptures in discourse) and Guattari's chaosmic incarnation (a more radical 'outside'), our metamodelization does gesture towards a point of accordance. S1 and S2 might be understood in terms of a machinic discursivity (real and possible respectively), which in our metamodelization is placed above and in tension with T and U (Guattari's chaosmic incarnation and incorporeal complexity, which read through Lacan's matheme are, precisely, below the 'bar', or unconscious).

Guattari himself performs a similar assimilation of the Lacanian model in his own metamodelization of 'The Place of the Signifier in the Institution', positioning *signifying semiologies* in a 'larger' asignifying economy that again owes much to Hjemslev:

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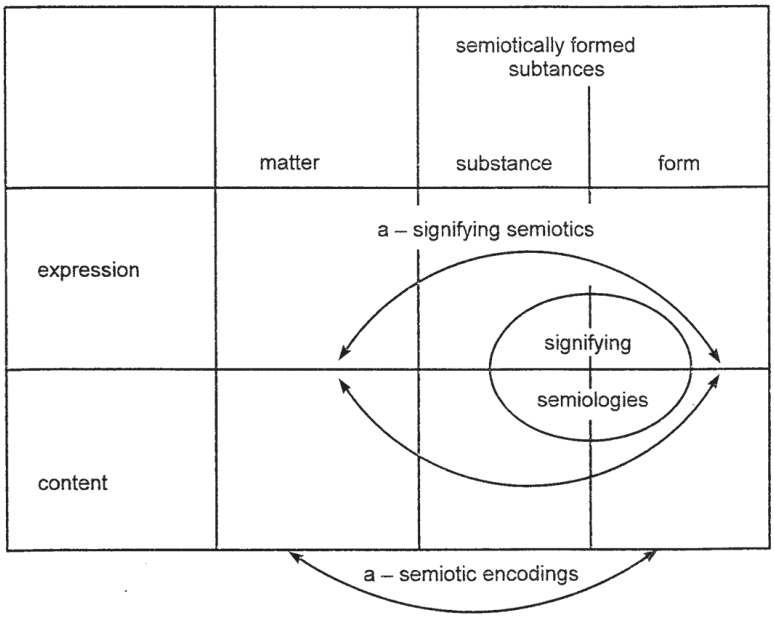

Figure 11.5 The Place of the Signifier in the Institution (from *The Guattari Reader*).

In this particular diagram (in which we suggest that matter would be the sphere of the real, and substance and form – semiotically formed substances – the sphere of the possible) we note that Guattari himself surrounds the place of the signifier in the institution with arrows (a-signifying semiotics). Importantly, the arrows traverse matter, substance and form (both the possible and the real). 'The Place of the Signifier in the Institution', then, marks out Guattari's specifically schizoanalytic contribution to clinical thought: the drawing out of a relation between a-signifying and signifying semiotics or semiologies within discursive regimes, and the proposition that such relations are generative (and themselves productions) of enunicative assemblages.

In that we are not here concerned with the production of subjects so much as aesthetic productions and their relation to contingency, our interest in Guattari's schemas is that a place for chaosmosis and for the non-human is marked out within discursive assemblages (something, as already suggested, lacking in Lacan's mathemes). Our specific aim though is to explore how these points of chaos or collapse (an 'outside') can be presented in art, that is, we are concerned with how the register of contingency can be tied or held by the domains of the actual and the discursive. In this we find a comparison between the meta-modelization above and Lacan's knots helpful.

In the seminar on *The Sinthome* (2013), Lacan demonstrates how different ways of knotting the Real (that which resists symbolization), the Symbolic

and the Imaginary (the RSI) produce different modelizations of subjectivity. Borromean knots – three-dimensional objects composed of three strands – are introduced in Lacan's late seminars to figure how specific subjectivities are produced through the binding of the three registers of the RSI. As Lacan's thought develops, he suggests that RSI knots are, in fact, bound by symptoms or sinthomes. That is, RSI rings are not tied into one another, and, as such, require the sinthome to maintain a knotting, for without sinthomes knots unravel or have no consistency:

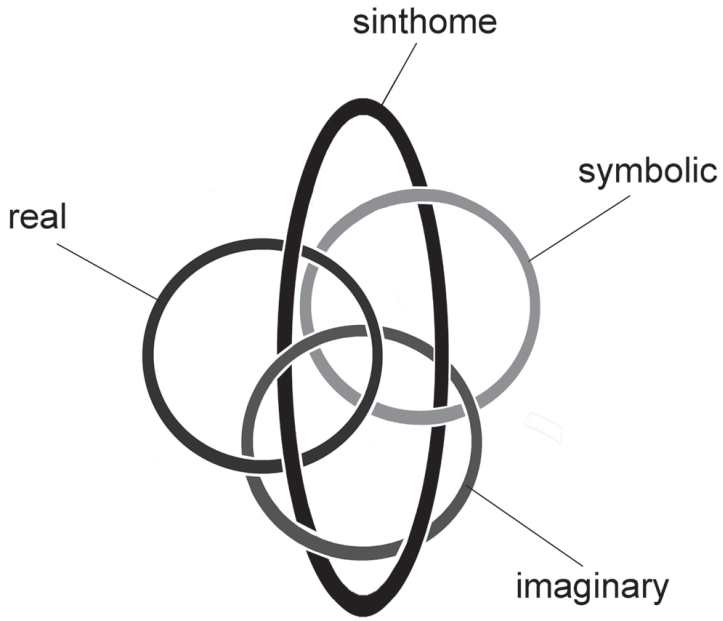

Figure 11.6 Lacan's RSI and sinthome.

This development marks Lacan's radical reassessment of his own past conceptions of subject structures and his abandonment of the mathemes that Guattari found so problematic. Lacan's knots diagram a new topological thinking and a radical revision of past ideas on psychosis and neurosis – each understood now as being in a more fluid relation with the other. Simply put, psychosis is no longer thought to be lacking something that neurosis itself possesses to maintain 'normality'. Indeed, at this time, Oedipalization – the belief in the Other and the myth of giving up desire for the Other (the Master–Slave dialectic) – becomes simply one more way of knotting Western subjectivity, one more 'name of the father' or sinthome that regulates or produces a consistency for a given subjectivity. Importantly, Lacan suggests that psychotics, who do not have the same access to the symbolic that neurotics have, knot the RSI in different ways

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to the latter. Lacan's key example here is James Joyce, who produces a writing to confound critics for hundreds of years to come, allowing 'Joyce' to become a 'great writer', 'writing' operating here as one more 'name of the father' – or sinthome – that provides a consistency for Joyce's subjectivity.

In comparing Lacan's knots to Guattari's schema, we can return to the question of how F-Φ (the actual and discursive) are tied, untied and retied with T-U (the register of contingency, or the virtual and non-discursive). (And, indeed, how F-Φ might capture T-U.) Lacan's answer might be that this is achieved with forms or activities, like Joyce's writing, which find a place within the symbolic or discourse *as* art. That is as *presentations* that are lodged within discourse without necessarily being fully contained by that discourse. This art of 'displaying' points of contingency and collapse (for example non-sense) involves the presentation of a holding pattern, a repetition or a sustained gesture of some kind: that is, a *practice*. We might suggestively 'illustrate' this particular metamodelization with the knot below:

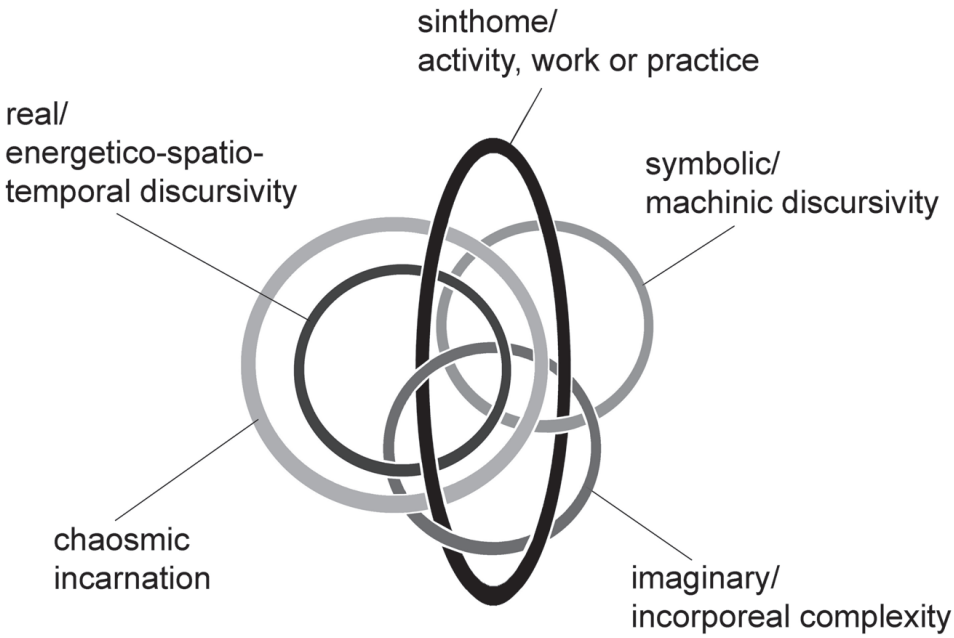

Figure 11.7 Lacan–Guattari metamodelization 2.

In our second Lacan–Guattari metamodelization we collapse a number of terms, with the understanding that their joining is forced but not without points of adhesion. Lacan's RSI – the Real, Symbolic and Imaginary – are paired respectively with Guattari's concepts to produce the rings of our knot: the Real is paired with 'energetico-spatial-temporal discursivity' (the actual constitution of any given entity or relation; again, as we suggested above, this

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pairing is particularly forced as we have here two different concepts of the R/real in play), the Symbolic is paired with 'machinic discursivity' and the Imaginary with 'incorporeal complexity'. To these three registers we add a fourth ring Guattari's 'chaosmic incarnation' (for which Lacan has no equivalent term). In our metamodelization, the sinthome, which is not exactly a material object but more akin to a kind of writing – that is the inscription of a signifier – passes through the 'symbolic/machinic discursivity' and 'imaginary/incorporeal complexity' rings, and, in doing so, 'traps' the remaining two rings.

We are attempting to address two problems here. The first is that Lacan's conception of RSI knots tied together with sinthomes, in lacking Guattari's concept of chaosmosis (or, indeed, any virtuality), has no way of accounting for the contingencies that Joyce's writing and other such art practices register, in that Lacan's knots do not point to anything outside the discourses, affects and images produced by human relations and rationalizations. At the same time, we are suggesting that Lacan's knots, and especially the development of the concept of the sinthome, ought to be thought of alongside Guattari's idea of real/possible or actual/virtual assemblages *and* his concept of the 'outside' (namely chaosmosis), to account for the consistency of productions spun out of or around chaosmosis. For what else might art be than a marking of chaosmosis, a (signifier) pointing to an 'outside'? And what else might Joyce's writing of *Finnegan's Wake* (or, indeed, Acconci's *Air Time* of our Prologue) be said to be other than a presentation of multiplicity, contingency, collapse – that is, chaosmosis?

It seems to us then that this particular 'chaosmotic knotting' produces an interesting metamodelization that doubles the patheme–matheme synthesis we discussed above. But as with all metamodelizations, the limits of specific diagrams are exposed, for we are proposing artworks as holding points for chaosmotic ruptures that neither grids nor knots adequately diagram. Although Lacan's sinthome and Guattari's concept of chaosmic incarnation have enabled us to explore art practice as a registering of an outside, our production–contingency synthesis requires a further diagrammatic form (a diagrammatic object that might be more appropriate to art production than the diagrams of subjectivity so far presented).

Voids and points

To help us produce this new diagrammatic object we will extend our interrogation of concepts from the late work of Lacan and Guattari, but before that we want to explore two terms that further engender a conjunctive synthesis – or

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knotting – of the matheme–patheme. First, returning to Lacan's sinthome, it seems to us that the binding performed by the latter involves a fiction or myth – or a certain activity and attachment that produces a fiction or myth. It is worth noting here that Lacan develops his conception of the 'name of the father', the myth of prohibition, under the influence of Levi-Strauss and his concept of the *mytheme*, defined as the 'kernel' of a belief that is found across myths and thus names a structural and intersubjective binding element. In his later work Lacan understood the 'name of the father' not as a special signifier but as any signifier used in a specific and distinctive way to tie chains of other signifiers together and thus give consistency to a symbolic order. Indeed, as we stated above, Lacan, in his later seminars, declares that there are many 'names of the father' (prohibition is named here as just one among others). Or to say it differently, there are many myths that produce (impossible) relations within the Symbolic. We wish to appropriate and recast the word mytheme as a good name for this binding operation and as a term for a machine that functions to maintain consistency for (and belief in) specific practices, relations or activities within intersubjective or symbolic structures (such as the sinthomes of writer, artist, experimenter, creative).

In contrast to this sinthome–mytheme binding machine, we would like to propose another invention, a schizoid machine we name *mysteme*. Mystemes are less to do with cohesion and consistency than with a given subject or entity's relations to an 'outside' – to contingency or the unconscious. They install a different kind of myth (or, indeed, in Georges Bataille's terms a non-myth/absence of myth): the grafting of an 'outside' (or, again, multiplicity or contingency) onto existing discursive regimes or subjective structures. They are, we would argue, more a-subjective than Guattari's enunciative assemblages, implying, as they do, radical cuts or punctures – being 'opened up' by an 'outside', or, at least, the myth of such a possibility. In Reza Negarestani's compelling turn of phrase they involve making 'a Good Meal out of yourself' for the universe (or, as Negarestani's calls the latter, the 'Life-Satan') (2008: 200).

To further expand this idea, we would say that mystemes are not knots of organization or cohesion but presentations of points of collapse or *holes* around which the edges of sense can be felt, seen, tasted, smelt, heard or thought. Put simply, mystemes are placeholders for chaosmosis that destabilize discursive or symbolic regimes. In this, mystemes are analogous to black holes that bend and collapse space–time and suspend the known laws of physics. Mystemes are lodged within but not contained by the myths and structures of a symbolic order (rather, they threaten to collapse sense and cast a heavy influence on all

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that encounter them). Like black holes, mystemes have event horizons beyond which chaosmosis resides. Indeed, they are registered by the accretions that form on this horizon or surface: warped objects, images, patterns, rhythms – and other gestures and discourses that circle them. Again, it is not the holes themselves that are important in this schema, but rather the *feeling* of the points of collapse, the *feeling* of the edges and the holding patterns that need to be marked out. For us, this is where art, among other practices, comes in, in so far as art practice (as one mytheme among others) is able to register such singularities within discourse, through repetitive gestures and as absurd dark noises, strange avatars, jokes and laughter, abstract and alien bodies, disorientating rhythms, and intense images and silences.

For ourselves this is also, once more, where the limits of clinical schizoanalysis might itself be marked: where the latter calls for responsibility and an ethico-aesthetic paradigm (and rightly so perhaps when treating psychotics or proposing an ecological politics for the environment, subjectivity and social relations), art practice *as* non-schizoanalysis involves itself in something that is precisely *non*-responsible. Becoming a good meal for the universe, or creating such a myth, is a de-stabilizing of structures, including the structure or myth of a self. This *might* be a form of therapy, but, if it is, it is one that is of a very strange kind, a schizostrategy (in Negarestani's terminology) – or, again, a *practice* that operates critically upon what exists (in the production of holes) through art and performance, or even the fiction of speculative thought. Such a practice is marked by an indifference to, if not refusal of, all the idealist notions of schizoanalysis: creativity, balance, ecology, harmony, differentiation, social production and the potential of the human (for all this turns out to be, precisely, 'all-too human', a domestication that can curtail the disturbing and radical affect of chaos and its myths).

Such a practice will then return a specifically *different* subject to the world – one that has, as it were, *been through* an 'outside'. (In this, the ethics or myth of such a practice is closer to Lacanian analysis perhaps – or even to a Buddhism, which calls for a passing through the Real – rather than to a schizoanalysis in which an actualization of immanent forces is called for to produce new subjectivities). Here we might think of the abject performances of Paul McCarthy or the joyful and excessive projections of Pipa Lotti Rist, each of which produces hyper-affective encounters (in that they give us *too much*: too much mustard and tomato sauce as bodily fluids, too much hyper-real fruit that produces hallucinogenic scenes). True, these examples circulate as named practices (as mythemes perhaps) within the field of art but they are also schizoid productions and presentations for others to encounter and engage with.

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To qualify this notion of non-schizoanalytic art we propose that the sinthome–mytheme machines of art (similar to other practices, identities and traditions) attend to and make room for mystemes (schizoid machines), giving them a place in discursive regimes. This operation has three distinct temporal modes: 1) A calling forth of the mysteme (an incantation or gathering); 2) A paralleling of the mystemes 'work' (the production of a scene, assemblage, rhythm or pattern); and 3) A 'reflecting on' the mysteme (a modelling). Another way of putting this is that non-schizoanalytic art allows for a kind of continuous 'being in the world' for points of collapse (precisely a narrative, at least of a kind). This sinthome–mytheme–mysteme relation answers the question of 'how to live being the meal' without entering into auto-destruction. Again, this is *not* a production of subjectivity in Guattari's sense; rather it is, once more, a strategic *practice* of sorts (that might involve a *series* of actions, even a *programme*). Indeed, we would suggest that this defines our own art practice: the sinthome–mytheme (or fiction–myth) of *Plastique Fantastique* gathers – *and presents within discourse* – a mysteme or a constellation of points of collapse or multiplicity.

Towards a non-schizoanalysis

Z-points

We promised a new diagrammatic object and have sketched out a preliminary account of it (the schizoid machine we name mysteme, with its relation to the sinthome–mytheme machine of art). There are, however, still questions to be answered about how such an object – or practice – might be produced or function. In order to answer these – and to prevent our new object merely hovering as a discursive mirage – we turn back to Guattari and to his theorization of the autopoietic nucleus or what he calls 'Z-point', with the intention of understanding his innovation but also, ultimately, to appropriate and invert its function, so as to further develop the operations of our schizoid invention.

What is a Z-point? Any point whatsoever. Indeed, anything (or, apparently, 'nothing') might operate as this point. An object (from a different regime perhaps?) *or* a subject (what else could love be?). It could be a shoe, sunlight on strands of hair, the opening notes or chorus of Beyonce's 'Crazy in Love'. Such an intensive point pins, ties or holds something (attention, desire, a gesture, the feel of leather, the gaze, lips mouthing the words of a song). Guattari himself relates these nuclei to a more typical analytic discourse in the essay 'Machinic Orality and Virtual Ecology' (in *Chaosmosis*) where these pre-objectal 'entities' – as he

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calls them in 'The New Aesthetic Paradigm' (again, in *Chaosmosis*) – are defined in psycho-, or schizoanalytic terms:

> In the wake of Freud, Kleinian and Lacanian psychoanalysts apprehended, each in their own way, this type of entity in their fields of investigation. They christened it the 'part object', the 'transitional object', situating it at the junction of a subjectivity and alterity which are themselves partial and transitional (1995: 94).

In passing it is worth noting that this notion of part objects is important for the genesis of Deleuze and Guattari's 'desiring-machines' (in *Anti-Oedipus*, 1984) that further 'rupture with Freudian determinism', situating the latter in more expanded and incorporeal 'fields of virtuality' (Guattari 1995: 95).

Guattari's essay on 'The New Aesthetic Paradigm' goes into even more detail about these entities, but, in fact, the whole of *Chaosmosis* concerns itself with a similar territory in so far as it tracks the different ways they might be articulated (autopoietic nuclei, part objects, object *a*, Z-points). Although analytic terms are used, Guattari also looks to the terminology of the new sciences in order to adequately layout his particular modelling of these entities as chaotic-complex assemblages (though, tellingly, he also refers to them, simply, as 'subjectivities'). In particular, and, again, in 'The New Aesthetic Paradigm', Guattari addresses a key question – 'from where do these nuclei emerge/arrive?' – attending to what he calls an 'infinite twisting line of flight' – a strange attractor – that slows chaos down, in the process organizing it and giving it a consistency (1995: 116).

Again, this subjective-entity or 'complex entitative multiplicity' has to be cohered, or 'indexed' to use Guattari's term, by 'an autopoietic nucleus' (1995: 114). This moment of grasping occurs then when the complex-chaotic field of multiplicity encounters the above line of flight – or what Guattari also calls a certain 'trans-monadism' (1995: 114). The latter introduces within chaos an 'ordered linearity' that allows 'the ordination of incorporeal complexions to crystallise' (1995: 114). Guattari likens this process to 'the pickup head of a Turing machine', arguing that 'linearity, the matrix of all ordination, is already a slowing down, an existential stickiness' (1995: 115). Like a tape-head that spools tape, or perhaps a turntable stylus that picks up dust and static, 'the chaotic nothing spins and unwinds complexity', carrying out 'an aggregative selection onto which limits, constants and states of things can graft themselves' (Guattari 1995: 114).

Is then a Z-point a binding point of a kind? It is at least a point around which subjectivity can coalesce. A strange idea perhaps, in that a Z-point might be but a brief disturbance within an environment, routine or life. However, for

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Guattari, even such fleeting events can produce an accretion, consistency or continuity of and for subjectivity.

These chaotic-complex entities maintain a relationship with the chaos or multiplicity out of which they are formed. Indeed, they are, as it were, of the same nature. They are a chaos given consistency. It is in this sense that the Z-point is a point of cohesion *but also* a point of dissolution. Guattari does not address this directly, but it seems to us that the Z-point is the void-point around which any given subjectivity is spun (and, in this, subjectivity maintains a cohesion of sorts, but one that is structurally precarious).

For us, the proposition that a Z-point and its accretions operate as a production–contingency assemblage, or as point of subjectivity *and* chaos, is valuable, not least in that, despite our claim that Guattari is somewhat too ethical, the above processuality – the spinning of consistency around a Z-point – certainly demonstrates that something more non-human can be involved in the production of subjectivity than the Lacanian clinic would allow. To add meat to this bone, a good example of such a production–contingency assemblage is Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* in which human time collapses into geological time, creating a fault line that the artist claims to have felt within his body when traversing the jetty.

However, despite Guattari's detailed description of the operations of Z-points and their relation to chaos, the question of whether Z-points produce consistency in ways similar to Lacan's binding machines remains. A further comparison between the inventions of Guattari and Lacan is necessary.

From quilting points to sinthomes

In the more early seminar on *The Psychoses* Lacan discusses the difference between neurotics and psychotics and speculates on how many 'quilting points' are needed to produce a 'normal' person, and, in contrast, how many points need to be lacking for the event of psychosis (1997: 268–9). Lacan's quilting point (*point de caption*) is envisaged as giving a certain cohesion and consistency to subjectivity ('the name of the father' – *the* paternal signifier – being the crucial quilting point during this period of Lacan's writing). Indeed, a quilting point functions to hold other signifiers in place. The term itself refers to buttons used by upholsterers to stop the padding – or stuffing – from moving about (chaotically) under the leather covering of a chair. It seems to us that this image is not so far from Guattari's own figuration of Z-points that we tracked above which also 'pin' chaosmosis.

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As we have already mentioned, in Lacan's later work the notion that a psychotic lacks a quilting point is dropped and the concept of the sinthome is developed. From quilting point to sinthome, Lacan is exploring points that arrest chaos or dissolution. In relation to this, there is the Lacanian observation that psychotics manage to exist in the world through specific arrangements of signifiers and relations, through mimicry or by anchoring themselves into the Symbolic by identifying with ideal ego positions – such as has been argued by Darian Leader in the case of Dr Harold Shipman for whom the role or mandate of 'Doctor' was, precisely, an anchoring point (2012: 273–93). Lacanian psychoanalysis is, in this sense, a discourse concerning binding points of one kind or another – might the same be said of Guattari's schizoanalysis? Does a Z-point operate as a signifier that gathers other signifiers?

It would seem to us that a differentiation can be made here in so far as a Z-point has no positive content or signification in the Symbolic (or at least it is not articulated in those terms by Guattari). We can perhaps say then that a Z-point operates as a kind of a-signifying quilting point, one that is specifically extra-discursive. Indeed, a Z-point might be constituted by any object or thing – as we suggested above – but also, we would further suggest, by a specific *practice* or *abstract gesture*. We are reminded here of the regimes, work, theatre and plays – the realm of 'heterogenetic encounter' as Guattari called it – of *La Borde* clinic that itself tied a community of psychotics and neurotics, patients and clinicians together, and, indeed, gave a certain kind of structure, however fluid, to each of the latter.

In fact, it seems to us that these practices might also be productive of Lacanian sinthomes. After all, the gestures and encounters at *La Borde* often led to and, indeed, involved 'named' roles: pharmacist, chef, artist, cleaner, actor, and so on. Guattari's specific contribution to this diagram of the clinic is that he draws Z-points from the register of contingency or chaosmosis, as precarious but significant points within subjective arrangements. But was there not also a role for certain practices, sinthomes or mythemes at *La Borde*, making room for, or giving consistency to, otherwise precarious subjective arrangements: A Z-point/Sinthome relation? In the schizoanalytic therapies and aesthetic experiments at the clinic, do we not find our sinthome–mytheme–mysteme machines at work?

In this, Guattari shared with others at *La Borde* an *aim* and an *ethics* – to save if not make bearable the lives of those who are suffering *and* to explore what such subjects might become. In this context, chaos and contingency (as an influx of bodies and signifiers) can be as dangerous as the imposition of

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impossible relations or signifiers (that cannot be received as anything but hostile by a psychotic). And here, once more, we can mark the difference between *schizoanalysis and the clinic* that promotes aesthetic activities as a therapeutics and *art as non-schizoanalysis*. For, if, as Jean Oury has stated, clinicians at *La Borde* attempt to 'graft an opening, a graft of transference at the level of originary narcissism' onto the delimited world of psychosis (as Oury suggests, a 'very delicate and complex work'), then art (as non-schizoanalysis) intends the opposite move, to graft an opening for chaos, contingency, and multiplicity (all the fears and fantasies of the people) onto existing social and symbolic representations, regimes and myths (Oury quoted in Novello and Reggio 2007: 40). Schizoanalysis and non-schizoanalysis might, at times, appear similar (indeed, as we have suggested above, they arise from the same insights), *but*, we would maintain, one is the mirror-image of the other.

Intermission: Plastique Fantastique *summon all the fantasies of the people!*

There are eight performers in all – eight feedback loops – playing music that is sparse and meditative at first, then more urgent until an intensity is reached and then ... silence. A voice, sometimes audible and sometimes drowned out, sometimes

Figure 11.8 *Plastique Fantastique* summon all the fantasies of the people!, Wysing Art Centre, Cambridgeshire, 2013.

calm and sometimes shouting, speaks of eight avatars for our times, representing all the fantasies of the people, including: Roy Burns*, 'soft spoken loner', psychotic reaction, the killer from* Friday 13th Part 5*;* The Little Jockey Riding the Big Jockey*, embodying perversion and perverse relations;* Staabucks Fukkee*, inverted logo and poisonous draft that intends harm; and* Voidrider*, suicidal nihilist, unfolding like a sea anemone. One by one the avatars are introduced, described and diagramed through a film projected during the performance, until finally* Twiglett*, redundant rave remnant, is manifested before all present: a standing stone for our times in flesh and branch. All the fantasies of the people were summoned by* Plastique Fantastique *at Wysing Art Centre, Cambridgeshire, in August 2013. It is an art work presented as the fiction of a community of non-community – a holding pattern of void points – in which anything can be played, any gesture can be made, and all fears and monsters can come out to say hello and dance.*

S/Z

In presenting our final metamodelization above, a new diagram of production and contingency, that both inverts schizoanalysis and then encircles or bundles up Z-points with sinthome–mytheme machines, we are perhaps moving too fast and have still to address a pressing question: What kind of relation are we drawing between sinthomes (S) and Z-points (Z)? Is such a relation impossible or useless – as Guattari (and Lacan too) might have it? How can we write or draw this relation? It cannot simply be that S + Z = the S/Z machine, for it is necessarily an unequal or asymmetrical relation: The two registers do not add up and pull and move in different directions.

What complicates this problem is that Guattari is less concerned with discourse (in the Lacanian sense) and the Symbolic, and further, in switching terminology from the psychoanalytic framework to the new sciences – and replacing desire with chaosmosis – Guattari jettisons the whole idea of an unconscious, at least in Lacan's terms (a 'below the bar'). Something is certainly lost in this move – specifically the idea of the barred subject (or, to put it another way, the Lacanian disjunction disappears). But something is also gained: a different kind of – materialist – account of the production of subjectivity in which the role of the Symbolic is less determining (or, in other terms, a continuum between finite–infinite, or subject–object is affirmed). As we have already suggested, it seems to us that this particular modelization is perhaps more amenable to the idea of art practice than to the production of a subject.

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Indeed, here again lies the trap of too therapeutic a perspective, of understanding art as a point of subject formation, or as a process for the benefit of an individual (art as a technology for the production of a self). For art is also necessarily a presentation, or even a presentation of presentation (gestures for others to encounter and engage with) – otherwise it is simply existing 'life'. Our suggestion is that art as non-schizoanalysis – or simply aesthetic practice beyond therapy – would capture or hold Z-points through a process of sinthomic organization, but then would also *present* points of rupture, rather than engender new subjectivities. We might write this relation – of signifiers or sinthomes and Z-points as art – as:

$$\frac{S}{Z}$$

However, this writing still privileges structure and the matheme. What is needed is something – a drawing, a model – that introduces the pathic and the 'outside'. An impossible object that pictures the above relation:

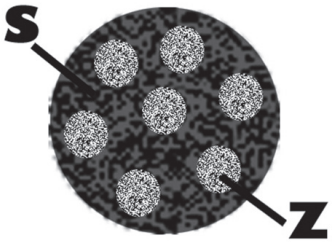

Figure 11.9 The sinthome/Z-point relation.

We have drawn a fizzing apparition full of voids, full of static, insects, plasma, teeth, full of pulsing and popping boils and hungry mystemes (full of soul-murderers and nerve-communications as Schreber might say). But in this diagram, the fizzing voids (the Z-points part) are circled, *drawn* and presented through art (the S part or sinthome/signifier). The thickness of S might grow as more gestures or discourse circle the Z-points which might then become benign with age. Indeed, S might harden and thicken, mummifying or fossilizing the diagram; but the Z-points themselves might spill over too, and wash S away, for S might become too porous a gesture to prevent the Z-points from escaping. This, we take it, is the physics – the proportional analysis – of a practice, the working out of ratios and relations that can only be done *on the ground* and thus, always, in and as experimentation.

Conclusion: Opened by the outside

Our S/Z drawing is an impossible object with strange qualities. A fiction of a kind. In fact, we should acknowledge that the diagram of non-schizoanalysis that we have attempted to articulate operates, like most mad inventions, in the Imaginary, and as a figure precariously positioned if not entirely detached from the actual order of things. Again, it is not, as it were, clinical, but functions through the production of strange narratives or myths – as well as producing untimely images which *speak back* to their producer. Such images and myths – that have been produced through accretion and layering and that include points of collapse within them – might work to counteract the increasing colonization of our unconscious (however that might be figured) by the culture and media industries.

It seems to us that this kind of myth-science is something that marks out Guattari's work with Deleuze, and especially *A Thousand Plateaus* (1988). Unlike Guattari's solo project that is undoubtedly clinical (and, as such, is indebted to Lacan), Deleuze and Guattari writing together produce something that is not strictly clinical but, rather, to invent a further term, is *imaginal* (the production of a narrative that operates in the Imaginary). It is perhaps this that makes their joint work so attractive to art practitioners, who also, it seems to us, practice in this register.

In the plateau 'On Several Regimes of Signs' Deleuze and Guattari provide a kind of meta-reflection on their own work, and, thus, the kind of practice we have in mind, that will invariably involve:

> … making a *tracing* of the mixed semiotics, under the generative component; making the transformational *map* of the regimes, with their possibilities for translation and creation, for budding along the lines of the tracing; making the *diagram* of the abstract machines that are in play in each case, either as potentialities or as effective emergences; outlining the *programme* of the assemblages that distribute everything and bring a circulation of movement with alternatives, jumps, and mutations (1988: 146–7).

While there is an affirmative, and still therapeutic and analytic, aspect to their tracings and transformational maps, there is also potential for 'points of collapse' in the programme outlined here. As Deleuze and Guattari remark, after looking into the possibilities of translation and transformation:

> … one could try to create new, as yet unknown statements for that proposition, even if the result were a patois of sensual delight, physical and semiotic systems

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> in shred, asubjective affects, signs without significance where syntax, semantics, and logic are in collapse … cries-whispers, feverish improvisations, becoming-animal, becoming-molecular, real transsexualities, continuums of intensity, constitutions of bodies without organs (1998: 147).

The work moves from tracing and mapping already existing regimes to something more experimental, something riskier: the production of new regimes of signs. It is in this sense that art leads us beyond the known, 'forming strange new becomings, new polyvocalities' (Deleuze and Guattari 1998: 191). Here we can say we favour the risk of Guattari's collaborations with Deleuze to Guattari's ethico-aesthetic orientation. Simply put *A Thousand Plateaus* might be said to open up another direction to that of *Chaosmosis*.

In fact, reflecting on our own understanding – and deployment of – schizo-analysis, and although there has been little direct reference to it, we would suggest that it is the practice as laid out in *Anti-Oedipus*, rather than, again, in Guattari's solo writings, that we take as our model. This is not so much in the mechanics of the machinic production of the residual subject which that book maps out (the three syntheses of the unconscious), but rather its experimental and *wild* style – the chance it takes – and the way in which it is peopled by strange diagrams and a dizzying array of literary characters and intensive states. Indeed, following this lead, we want to suggest that schizoanalysis – including, here, our own idea of a non-schizoanalysis – is always a work in progress and always a necessary *betrayal* of any given definitions (including of itself).

As such, and in conclusion, we understand schizoanalysis as a 'positive' therapy in Guattari's terms, but we also believe there is a further function for schizoanalysis beyond therapy, what we have called the function of art as non-schizoanalysis. This function might simply be called an ethics of rupture. It is this other function of schizoanalysis that might deliver paralysis, panic and joy for the human (or, indeed, a kind of humiliation in the face of contingencies – such as those produced by Copernicus, Darwin and Freud, as the philosopher Robin McKay argues (2011: 3)), and through which new relations to an 'outside' might be formed. This would be a very different ecology or economy to the autopoietic organization of subjectivity suggested by Guattari.

In his book on *Foucault,* after writing about the ancient Greeks and the folding in of the 'outside' as a subjectivation that is invented by the latter, Deleuze refers to the 'Oriental fold', which, in fact, he suggests might not be a folding in of the outside at all, but, something radically different, a kind of unfolding – or cut – to the outside (in our terms, a kind of mysteme), that is, precisely *not* the production of a subject (see Deleuze 1988: 36). This idea of an

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opening to an outside is close to a Buddhist technology (though there is also an emphasis on preparation and the consolidation of a territory in Buddhist practice that will allow for this opening). Ultimately though it is certainly not that a Buddhist is able to access the outside (an assimilation of the outside *by* a given subject), because, at this point, there is no subject to do the accessing and assimilating. This is not an analysis or therapeutics but something else, something that involves a kind of work, but not necessarily the production of a subject. It is not a human technology in this sense but something more alien. It seems to us that art as non-schizoanalysis is as much about these inhuman practices as it is about anything human.

Coda: Cloud gives birth to new animal: Plastique Fantastique *welcome Neuropatheme – a.k.a. subject-without-experience, empty-the-cave, etc.*

Clouds of incense and the flickering of a strobing projection. A song starts up. A 'subject' is selected – and then covered with honey and glitter. A microphone is held to the subject's mouth, prompting them to echo or repeat the words of the song – Neuropatheme Sutra – *that tells the story of a figure who resists all regimes of communication and connection. Then, with some force, the microphone that hitherto had been a mode of communication (at least of a sort) is inserted into this entities mouth (putting an end to its singing) before ribbons are tied around and around the head. The figure can no longer speak or sing but it can make a noise through the use of the muscles and organs in the mouth, throat, and chest, which the microphone channels to a mixing desk and sound system. Attendants welcome this figure as* Neuropatheme. *The creature continues to make sounds and to listen to its own noise, with the sole intention of becoming a feedback loop, and nothing else.* Neuropatheme *stands before an audience who behold an absurd figure – a comical monster – a non-subject-object. The audience watches this bizarre performance, expressing verbally their discomfort with, or amusement at* Neuropatheme's *abjection. All become immersed in, or indifferent to, this spectacle, but all sense that* Neuropatheme *is hollow, an empty cave, voided. The myth and production of the living void* Neuropatheme *was presented at the* Institute of Contemporary Art, *London in June 2013.*

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Figure 11.10 Cloud gives birth to new animal: *Plastique Fantastique* welcome Neuropatheme, ICA London, 2013.

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