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 “A SONOROUS PEOPLE”

 Techno|Music and the Joyful
 Body|Politic

[Treat] a book as you would treat a record you listen to.

—DELEUZE AND PARNET, *Dialogues* 3

The book is not a root-tree, it is a piece of a rhizome, the plateau of a rhizome for the reader it suits. The combinations, permutations, utilisations are never internal to the book, but depend on connections with a particular outside. Yes, take what you want.

—DELEUZE AND GUATTARI, “Rhizome” 68

IN *NOISE*, JACQUES ATTALI attempts to read music as an indicator [even a predictor] of social change. Since his intention is “not only to theorize *about* music, but to theorize *through* music” (4), Attali demonstrates that music can function as the unconscious of the Body|Politic, as an experiment with new social and political realities. In describing the evolution of the orchestra, he sees its stratified hierarchy as a model for an equally stratified Body|Politic, with the conductor conducting the discrete sections of the orchestra with the same dictatorial authority that a sovereign would use to command soldiers and cavalries—“the conductor as a leader of men, simultaneously entrepreneur and State, a physical representation of power in the economic order” (67). Just as R. Murray Schafer sees “the traditional sonata form [a]s a model for a colonial empire” (59), Attali sees the political economy of the nineteenth century reflected in the concert tradition of its time, where the bourgeoisie listened to eighteenth-century music, to a harmonious musical ensemble that mirrored a similarly harmonious industrial order: “Mozart and Bach reflect the bourgeoisie’s dream of harmony better than and prior to the whole of nineteenth-century political theory” (*Noise* 5–6).

Attali constructs his political economy of music as a “succession of *orders* . . . done violence by *noises* . . . that are *prophetic* because they create new orders, unstable and changing” (19). He starts with music as *sacrifice*, as a ritual based on fear, where the violence of noise is channeled into acceptable rituals binding the group together—by sacrificing chaos, the very

possibility of a social order upon which power rests is affirmed. The next step, music as *representation*, music as a way to “make people believe in a consensual representation of the world” (46) based on harmony and of exchange, begins the deritualization of music and the concomitant establishment of an orderly Body|Politic. *Repetition* regards music as reproduction, which is a view of music very similar to Adorno’s critique of mass culture and popular music, of the commodification of art. Adorno states that in the twentieth century, the culture industry had taken control of art and by endless reproduction turned it into a means of ideological control. Popular music, such as jazz, expresses for him precisely the debasement and conformity that capitalism imposes on the members of the Body|Politic: “I am nothing, I am filth, no matter what they do to me it serves me right” (“Perennial Fashion” 132). Music as repetition establishes a “society of repetition in which nothing will happen anymore” (Attali, *Noise* 5)—an echo of Adams’s fear of entropic degradation, with no energy exchange possible any more, in a society of ‘assembly-line types.’ Repetition here imposes a code of normality, as the repetition of the same.

This is the state of the political economy of music at the time Attali was writing, in 1977. But he envisioned a following stage, which he curiously calls *composition*—what he actually has in mind is something akin to improvisation and experimentation. Attali quotes Barthes when he claims that *composition* means “to put music into operation, to draw it toward an unknown praxis” (quoted in *Noise* 135).¹ Attali senses that the era of repetition also “heralds the emergence of a formidable subversion, one leading to a radically new organization never yet theorized, of which self-management is but a distant echo” (5). Composition does not refer to the concept of meticulously planning and arranging a piece that is then ‘executed’ by an orchestra, but rather is similar to Deleuze’s “plan of composition” (*Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* 128), which Deleuze vehemently opposes to what he calls a “plan of organization.” In the plan of composition, “there is no longer a form, but only relations of velocity between infinitesimal particles of an unformed material. There is no longer a subject, but only individuating affective states of an anonymous force. Here the plan is concerned only with motions and rests, with dynamic affective charges” (ibid.). In the strategy of *composition* [in itself a line of flight within the era of *repetition*, in that repetition in itself also ‘allows for’ repetition of/as difference, not sameness, and of subversion], emerging “from within repetition, certain deviations announce a radical challenge to it: the proliferating circulation of pirated recordings, the multiplication of illegal radio stations, the diverted usage of monetary signs as a mode of communicating forbidden political messages—all of these things herald the invention of a radical subversion, a new mode

of social structuring" Attali, (*Noise* 131–32). With this new mode of *composition*, Attali sees the emergence of "the seeds of a new noise, one exterior to the institutions and customary sites of political conflict . . . It may be the essential element in a strategy for the emergence of a truly new society" (133).

In this chapter, I want to follow Attali's lead in seeing an intimate connection between music and the Body|Politic, or, more precisely, in seeing music as providing models for a "truly new" Body|Politic. Writing in 1977, Attali could not foresee, although he might have imagined, developments in popular music that took place in the mid-1980s, especially the emergence of the phenomenon of techno.² Its 'origins' lie in Chicago's African American gay culture and Detroit's African American electronic music of the late 1970s/early 1980s.³ Quite a number of publications have examined techno either from the perspective of the artists involved, or in connection with drug [ab] use.⁴ By using a different framing, I want to position the phenomenon of techno within the context of poststructuralist theories and philosophy. As a kind of theoretical background noise, I have sampled different concepts by Deleuze|Guattari, because they—much like techno itself—are concerned with the limits of subject, author, and representation.⁵ Thus, drawing from various discourses, this chapter shares techno's strategy of sampling, of putting heterogeneous elements into a new context.

Following Attali's lead, I will first of all outline Deleuze|Guattari's theory of [pop] music and its political implications. In connection with Kafka's minor literature, Deleuze|Guattari define pop as "an escape for language, for music, for writing. What we call pop—pop music, pop philosophy, pop writing—*Worterflucht*. To make use of the polylingualism of one's own language, to make a minor or intensive use of it, to oppose the oppressed quality of this language to its oppressive quality, to find points of nonculture or underdevelopment, linguistic Third World zones by which a language can escape, an animal enters into things, an assemblage comes into play" (*Kafka* 26–27). What defines pop and minor literature is that both are a form of multiplicity—in fact, for Deleuze|Guattari, "RHIZOMATICS = POP ANALYSIS" (*Thousand Plateaus* 24). This formula is a shorthand for a longer formula, which reads RHIZOMATICS = SCHIZOANALYSIS = STRATOANALYSIS = PRAGMATICS = MICROPOLITICS" (22). The theorizing *through* music suggested by Deleuze|Guattari invites a reading of pop [analysis] as micropolitics. Pop as a rhizome, then, has to be read against the 'tree-like' form of formal classical composition—not only the mode of organization of classical composition itself, but also its system of filiation [and the anxiety of influence] by which composers refer to their predecessors, a line that proceeds in developments of schools and antischools of composition. Relating Deleuze|Guattari's

approach to Attali's, what distinguishes the rhizomatic strategy of pop from the [European] tradition of great composers is that instead of focusing on *representation*, pop is more concerned with bricolage, replacing the composer/author with the producer—and it is here that the phenomenon of techno becomes politically relevant. Simon Reynolds has pointed at a connection between Deleuze/Guattari's concepts, techno, and the Body|Politic. He states that the “rhizome . . . is used by Deleuze and Guattari to evoke a kind of polymorphous perversity of the body politic. ‘Rhizomatic’ music might include the fractal, flow-motion funk of Can and early seventies Miles Davis (based around the ‘nobody solos’ and ‘everybody solos’ principle), dub reggae (with its dismantling of the normal ranking of instruments in the mix), and the cut’n’splice mixology of hip-hop, house and jungle DJs” (*Energy* 388). I will relate the following argument to that notion and also analyze the connections between the sonorous body of techno music and the ‘community of ravers,’ a connection that Deleuze/Guattari hint at in their concept of the “*Dividual*,” which describes “the type of musical relations and the intra- or intergroup passages occurring in group individuation . . . individualized, not according to the persons within it, but according to the affects it experiences” (*Thousand Plateaus* 341). I will constantly oscillate between the analysis of the sonorous body and its implications for a Body|Politic. In this assemblage of music, bodies, and affects, a new Body|Politic spontaneously emerges: “a sonorous . . . People” (342).⁶

Rock ’n’ roll culture has always defined itself in terms of phallic sex and/or deviance [in terms of the law, the common sense, and its aesthetics]. The last three decades have witnessed a decisive shift, and I will shortly contrast rock ’n’ roll with what I consider two of the main components of mainstream music. On the one hand, although the king of rock ’n’ roll [Elvis Presley] and his smudgy, deviant—but true—heirs [Sid Vicious|Johnny Thunders] have died, the revival of both rock ’n’ roll and the great rock ’n’ roll swindle nevertheless goes on. In contrast to the lyrics of ‘traditional rock music’ with its [mostly] Oedipal scenarios [freedom|peace|love&sex],⁷ hip-hop and rap start from the fact of ghetto [the tribe], and segregation, a situation that might change for the better, but also might become worse. Nevertheless, although their *music* deterritorializes notions of representation, hip-hop and rap still operate on the discursive level, on the level of the outspoken signified and of lyrics [hopefully ‘explicit’ and labeled with the parental warning].⁸ During the last thirty years, yet another style has evolved: techno, a style associated not with ‘natural’ instruments like guitar, bass, and drums, but with segments of the frequency spectrum on the monitor of the analyzer; not with real time and live performance, but with a step-by-step stratification of rhythms, samples, digital filters, and delay effects—

a style that has its roots in Chicago ‘[Ware]house’ deejay style and Detroit electronic music culture. House music was ‘born’ in Chicago in the mid-late 1970s as a reaction to the mainstream sellout of disco—house is disco ‘going underground.’ The African American gay community in Chicago wanted ‘something harder’ to dance to—harder rhythms and simple bass lines—which led to Frankie Knuckles, a deejay, experimenting with mixing tracks that combined vocal and instrumental fragments of earlier disco and the machinic rhythms of Kraftwerk. The result was a groove that was “more energetic and polyrhythmic” (A. Thomas 25) than that of heterosexual African Americans.

The Chicago sound paved the way for Detroit techno, which emerged as a site-specific phenomenon in Detroit in the early/mid-1980s and is associated in particular with the African American producers Juan Atkins, Kevin Saunderson, and Derrick May. Growing up in the impoverished inner city of Detroit after the area’s economic collapse as the center of the American automobile industry, these musicians explored the possibilities of the newly available [and affordable] electronic instruments such as rhythm machines and sequencers. They fused electronic music [and its long tradition, including influences such as Luigi Russolo, Karlheinz Stockhausen, and Kraftwerk] with the tradition of black funk and soul [Detroit’s Motown label was the first record label owned by an African American, and it featured African American artists]. The black community in Detroit then organized their own clubs and sound systems, below the radar of [official] mainstream culture. In its use of polyrhythmic [sometimes even arrhythmic] beats, its use of ‘machines,’ and its futuristic themes, techno seemed to directly engage with the social and political issues of twentieth-century urban industrial America at the end of the cold war. Like house music in Chicago, techno was first primarily a local phenomenon—of minorities [African Americans, gays] who were *becoming-minor* in their deterritorializing of mainstream trends. Detroit techno, in particular, was an ‘underground’ art—the ‘traxx’ were distributed on tapes first, then ‘home labels’ released very limited numbers of twelve-inch singles. Techno remained a local phenomenon until these records made it to Europe. As a consequence of the immediate incorporation of Detroit techno and Chicago house in the emerging underground rave scene in England, the early pioneers of techno—and techno itself—became ‘bigger’ in Europe than in the United States, so that the ‘second wave’ of techno took place almost exclusively abroad. One of the reasons why techno never became as big in the United States as in Europe might be the fact that rap and hip-hop, which evolved simultaneously, attracted bigger audiences because of their use of lyrics, which made it easier to link it to the ‘representation machine’ of outspoken propositions—and which made it easier to

control. In what follows, I will focus on the political potential of techno music. Although techno ‘originated’ in the United States, I can show what might have been only by examining techno as exported to Europe, where the possibilities that flashed up in techno’s *primal scene* blazed more intensely and longer—until this ‘temporary zone’ was coopted by ‘the market.’ I am aware that my highly affirmative reading of techno ultimately presents it as a utopian concept: I aim to develop its potential rather than its ‘actuality,’ a potential that sometimes is present only in an infinitely small flicker before its cooptation. As Deleuze|Guattari put it, “to say that revolution is itself utopia of immanence is not to say that it is a dream, something that is not realized . . . it is to posit revolution as . . . infinite movement . . . , relaunching new struggles whenever the earlier one is betrayed” (*What Is Philosophy?* 100).

American deejays and musicians|producers such as Frankie Knuckles and Juan Atkins took ‘machines’ [records, turntables, synthesizers, samplers] and used them not in the way they were supposed to be used, introducing techniques of deterritorialization [scratching, sampling, microtonal modulation, etc.]—these were creative usages of technology, “nonconformist usages of the rhizome and not the tree type” (Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues* 27).⁹ For Deleuze|Guattari, the new quality of techno’s machinery and the deterritorialization that focuses on the *immanent* differences of sound rather than on a composer’s plan[e] of organization is epitomized in the synthesizer, which they describe as “a musical machine of consistency, a *sound machine* (not a machine for reproducing sounds), which molecularizes and atomizes, ionizes sound matter, and harnesses a cosmic energy. If this machine must have an assemblage, it is the synthesizer. By assembling modules, source elements, and elements for treating sounds (oscillators, generators, and transformers), by arranging microintervals, the synthesizer makes audible the sound process itself, the production of that process, and puts us into contact with still other elements beyond sound matter” (*Thousand Plateaus* 343). Music is first of all *sound matter*, and therefore “a deterritorialization of the voice, which becomes less and less tied to a language” (302). In contrast to representation and discursive meaning, Deleuze|Guattari pose the nonsignifying qualities of sound, which might also deterritorialize the voice itself: “Only when the voice is tied to timbre does it reveal a tessitura that renders it heterogeneous to itself and gives it a power of continuous variation: it is then no longer accompanied, but truly ‘machined’” (96). In techno, vocals are used in their sonic quality, and even if they indicate ‘meaning,’ they “write with slogans” (24).

The phenomenon of techno emerged at a time when the ‘grand narratives’¹⁰ and ideologies no longer applied, when the big institutions of the

state were in decline. In 1990, Deleuze wrote an essay called "Postscript on Societies of Control," in which he develops Foucault's views on the disciplinary societies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries further into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, a transition that resulted in what Deleuze calls "*Control Societies*" (*Negotiations* 178). Deleuze interestingly uses words such as *analogical*, *digital*, and *modulation* (*ibid.*) to describe this transition—words that also are prominent in techno. Commenting on the idea of the machinic Body|Politic, Deleuze states that "it's easy to set up a correspondence between any society and some kind of machine, which isn't to say that their machines determine different kinds of society but that they express the social forms capable of producing them and making use of them . . . control societies function with a third generation of machines, with information technology and computers, where the passive danger is noise, and the active, piracy and viral contamination" (180). Thus, both the phenomenon of techno and control societies are based on information technology, and techno, I argue, deterritorializes this technology, introduces both noise and piracy into its music that in turn proposes an alternative to the controlling Body|Politic.¹¹ In another text from 1990 on control societies, "Control and Becoming," Deleuze also comments on the modes of resistance particular to that Body|Politic and states that "computer piracy and viruses, for example, will replace strikes and what the nineteenth century called 'sabotage' ('clogging' the machinery)" (175). Such a resistance, however, "would be nothing to do with minorities speaking out. Maybe speech and communication have been corrupted . . . We've got to hijack speech. Creating has always been something different from communicating. The key thing may be to create vacuoles of noncommunication, circuit breakers, so we can elude control" (*ibid.*). Techno's nonsignifying strategy, its deterritorialization of both the voice and representation machines, comes close to such a 'creative resistance.' Ultimately, what Deleuze is "interested in are collective creations rather than representations" (169), and techno, in addition to its destratification of representation, as 'a movement' is neither negation, nor affirmation of something—rather, it aims at the Utopia of affirming the moment of its becoming and is a demonstration for/of that moment. Hence the paradox that techno parades such as the Love Parades or the MayDays were allowed as political demonstrations, but they did not fit the model of either/or of state versus resistance politics: instead, techno "hollowed out an ever expanding zone of indiscernibility or indetermination" (*Essays Critical and Clinical* 71).¹²

Techno was highlighted as a political issue in Great Britain's CJPO—the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, chapter 33. The English law was the first to provide an 'official' definition of dance and techno music,

and to regulate the handling of this kind of music. This act aimed at the ‘deviant behavior’ not only of ravers, but of squatters and travelers—gypsies—as well, people whose lifestyle is not one of conformity/uniformity. The section that criminalizes raves and techno music deserves to be quoted in its entirety:

Powers to remove persons attending or preparing for a rave.

Section 63.—(1) This section applies to a gathering on land in the open air of 100 or more persons (whether or not trespassers) at which amplified music is played during the night (with or without intermissions) and is such as, by reason of its loudness and duration and the time at which it is played, is likely to cause serious distress to the inhabitants of the locality; and for this purpose— (a) such a gathering continues during intermissions in the music and, where the gathering extends over several days, throughout the period during which amplified music is played at night (with or without intermissions); and (b) “music” includes sounds wholly or predominantly characterised by the emission of a succession of repetitive beats.

The law speaks from the position of those who know that one sleeps at night, who know that loud music makes people aggressive, and who share the mythical belief that music is [or should be] natural. In contrast, this machinic “emission of a succession of repetitive beats” truly deserves to be put in [ironic] quotation marks. A deviator from the routines of normality and an adversary of the law on ‘natural/organic music’ “commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three month or a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale” (CJPO 63.6b). The law appears as a molar machine, a castrating agency, as ‘Daddy says no!’ The law has branded techno as machinic noise, as deviant, like a father who disclaims any responsibility for this disobedient, machinic child. It is indeed the very complicity of childishness and a machinic logic that will be a central perspective in my reading of techno.

In the [Lacanian] cultural/representational machine, desire is inevitably dependent upon the symbolic register [and the Oedipus complex and castration/death], even though it is nonetheless exactly what escapes language, what is always left over in articulation: “The moment in which desire becomes human is also that in which the child is born into language” (*Écrits* 103). The entry into this machine marks the very moment in which the real *jouissance* [of the body of the drives] is substituted by the culturally acceptable [and castrated] phallic, symbolic *jouissance* of desire [which Lacan calls *jouis-sens*]: a desire that is made *human* by the very act of tying the human subject to the phallic *machinic* whose Oedipal molar machines function ac-

ording to the logic of Western phallogocentrism. Desire is directed to a [however impossible] signified, its metonymic drift propelling forward along the culturally loaded and law-ful chain of signifiers: 'Daddy says yes!'

Against Lacan's notion of desire based on lack, Deleuze/Guattari pose their notion of a machinic desire, a desire that does not lack, that is not played out on the theater of representation, but a desire that produces, couples, and connects. The materiality of desire [what Freud and Lacan would call "drive"] for Deleuze/Guattari constitutes a machine quite different from Lacan's molar and representational machines, running on lack: "Desire is never an undifferentiated instinctual energy, but itself results from a highly developed, engineered setup rich in interactions" (*Thousand Plateaus* 215). The Lacanian machine, ultimately, is not 'machinic enough' to deal with the complexity and self-organizing forces of the material it aims to represent:

We should bear in mind that there is a machinic essence which will incarnate itself in a technical machine, and equally in the social and cognitive environment connected to this machine—social groups are also machines, the body is a machine, there are scientific, theoretical and information machines. The abstract machine passes through all these heterogeneous components but above all it heterogenises them, beyond any unifying trait and according to a principle of irreversibility, singularity and necessity. In this respect the Lacanian signifier is struck with a double lack: it is too abstract in that it makes heterogeneous, expressive materials translatable, it lacks ontological heterogenesis, it gratuitously uniformises and syntaxises diverse regions of being, and, at the same time, it is not abstract enough because it is incapable of taking into account the specificity of these machinic autopoietic nodes. (Guattari, *Chaosmosis* 39)

In addition to the representation machine, there is another machine, a noisy machine like the one that underlies the soundtrack of David Lynch's *Eraserhead*, machines from which these cultural machines emerge. Jean-Luc Nancy refers to "the world-wide rhythm from jazz to rap and beyond" and affirms that that this "noise: it's like the verso of thinking, but also like what rumbles in the folds of bodies" (100–101).¹³ It is the physical machines of production that underlie the psychic machines of representation. These machines are described by Deleuze/Guattari as "desiring machines, which are of a molecular order . . . : formative machines, whose very misfirings are functional . . . chronogeneous machines engaged in their own assembly (*montage*), . . . machines in the strict sense, because they proceed by breaks and flows, associated waves and particles, associative flows and partial objects" (*Anti-Oedipus* 286–87).

For Deleuze|Guattari, then, the machine has first of all connotations that differ from the notion of machine as merely a technical apparatus. Guattari states:

In the history of philosophy the problem of the machine has generally been regarded as secondary to a more general system—that of *technè* and technique (*la technique*). I would propose a reversal of this point of view, to the extent that the problem of technique would now only be a subsidiary part of a much wider machine problematic. Since the “machine” is opened out towards its machinic environment and maintains all sorts of relationships with social constituents and individual subjectivities, the concept of technological machine should therefore be broadened to that of *machinic agencements*. This category encompasses everything that develops as a machine in its different registers and ontological supports. And here, rather than having an opposition between *being* and the machine, or *being* and the subject, this new notion of the machine now involves *being* differentiating itself qualitatively and emerging onto an ontological plurality, which is the very extension of the creativity of machinic vectors. (“On Machines” 9)

Going beyond an evolving teleology that traces the machine as a function in a series starting with simple tools, Deleuze|Guattari’s machine is not solely an instrument of work in which social knowledge is absorbed and enclosed, but one that opens up in different social contexts to different connections and couplings: “There is no such thing as either man or nature now, only a process that produces the one within the other and couples the machines together” (*Anti-Oedipus* 2). Deleuze|Guattari do not reduce|restrict the concept of the machine to cultural|cultural representational machines, nor do they use it as metaphor [Lacan, I argue, does both]—they are much more concerned with the question how actual [desire-]machines emerge from heterogeneous elements. In addition to Deleuze—who, through his reading of Leibniz, sees the human body as infinitely machined—Guattari points out to see the machinic aspect of the Body|Politic: “The machine has to be directly conceived in relation to a social body If such is the case, one cannot regard the machine as a new segment that succeeds that of the tool, along a line that would have its starting point in abstract man. For man and the tool *are already* components of a machine constituted by a full body acting as an engineering agency, and by men and tools that are engineered [*machinés*] insofar as they are distributed on his body” (“Balance-Sheet” 142). Technology does not *extend* man’s|life’s power [it is not a prosthesis, as in Freud’s “prosthetic God,”¹⁴ not a secondary addition that either enslaves or liberates us]—man|life *is* inherently machinic insofar as it *is* the production and proliferation of multiple connections between natural, technical,

genetic, social, and other forces. Deleuze|Guattari's concept of the machine shifts the focus from the technological machine [apparatus] to the question how a Body|Politic is 'machined,' and how from particular machinic assemblages [affective, physical, psychic, technical, and semiotic machines and their respective machinic interactions] a particular Body|Politic emerges. The question they ask with regard to the 'literary machine' of the book, I will ask with regard to the 'sonorous machine' of techno: "What is the relation of this literary machine to a war machine, love machine, revolutionary machine . . . the only question is which other machine the literary machine can be plugged into, must be plugged into in order to work" (*Thousand Plateaus* 4).

Molar machines, ultimately, are molecular machines under "determinate conditions" (*Anti-Oedipus* 287), two 'phase states' of desire-machines that produce both representation and production. "Determinate conditions," for Deleuze|Guattari, mean molarity, since "determinate conditions" for them imply "those statistical forms into which the machines enter as so many stable forms, unifying, structuring, and proceeding by means of heavy aggregates; the selective pressures that group the parts retain some of them and exclude others, organizing the crowds. These are therefore the same machines, but not at all the same régime" (287–88). The machine has a structure like a Möbius strip, where the 'two sides' of production|representation, molecular|molar, rhizome|tree, Body|Politic, and so forth are actually unilateral. Techno, in its decidedly apolitical stance and in its deterritorialization of technology and traditional notions of music, is more concerned with the first terms in these formulas, with the rhizomatic, molecular production of a Body|Politic. Achim Szepanski, the owner and founder of the labels Force Inc. and Mille Plateaux, has explained that in techno, "you can hear a multitude of noises, shrieks, chirps, creaks, and whizzes. These are all sounds traditionally associated with madness . . . Techno in this sense is schizoid music: it deconstructs certain rules and forms that pop-music has inflicted on sounds, on the other hand it has to invent the rules that subject sounds to operations of consistency" (140–41, my translation).¹⁵ For Deleuze|Guattari, these sounds point toward a becoming-animal, toward a molecular deterritorialization of the territorializing refrains of birdsong: "The reign of birds seems to have been replaced by the age of insects, with its much more molecular vibrations, chirring, rustling, buzzing, clicking, scratching, and scraping. Birds are vocal, but insects are instrumental: drums and violins, guitars and cymbals. A becoming-insect has replaced becoming-bird, or forms a block with it. The insect is closer, better able to make audible the truth that all becomings are molecular (cf. Martenot's waves, electronic music)" (*Thousand Plateaus* 308).¹⁶ By concentrating on the unreasonable resonances *beyond* meaning, in techno the polymorphous drives act against

repressive, phallic desire—childhood against adulthood. Deleuze|Guattari’s definition of drives sets the tone for how I want the term *childhood* to be understood in what follows: “Drives and part-objects are neither stages on a genetic axis nor propositions in a deep structure; they are political options for problems, they are entryways and exits, impasses the child lives out politically, in other words, with all the force of his or her desire” (13). Instead of the concept of the individual’s development as a trajectory from the polymorphous perversity of bodily drives to their hierarchical ordering by Oedipal relations, Deleuze|Guattari concentrate on the molecular desire-machine’s BwO’s capacity for experimentation, for a maximization of connections between part-objects *within* the Body|Politic, and with its outside, a strategy that does not integrate its parts into a whole that then in turn molarly over-codes, closes, and hierarchically fixes them.

In its deterritorialization of striated apparatuses, techno reveals a close affinity with what Deleuze|Guattari call “the war machine.” The war machine first of all relates to the nomadic mode of warfare that distinguished nomads from the state war machine—the army, with its general and hierarchic chain of command [n + 1]. The nomadic war machine was an immanently ‘organized’ machinic assemblage of man|horse|stirrup|bow, operating according to internal logics “no longer tied to a State apparatus . . . [but to] a physics of packs” (490), populating smooth space rather than the striated space of molar organizations. The war machine, then, is a molecular machine opposed to the molar state. This machine, then, is a Body|Politic not structured according to discrete cells, such as the Oedipal family—even though there are nomadic families: “In the war machine, the family is a band vector instead of a fundamental cell” (366), a “band of intensity” (31) rather than one of Oedipal organization.¹⁷ War machines are self-organizing multitudes, not orderly formations, but “swarming, teeming . . . races and tribes” (29).¹⁸ In contrast to the striated and segmentary structure of the state apparatus, the war machine tends toward permanent exchange and openness. However, Deleuze|Guattari warn against identifying the war machine with making war. First of all, the nomadic war machine is a determination to occupy smooth space. Deleuze opts for a more general “characterization of ‘war machines’ that’s nothing to do with war but to do with a particular way of occupying, taking up, space-time, or inventing new space-times: revolutionary movements . . . , but artistic movements too, are war-machines in this sense” (*Negotiations* 172). However, when striation stands in the way of nomadic free movement, ‘war’ is the result. The “infernal . . . desiring-machine” (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 83) of techno fosters a rage against the machine not from the [however illusory] position of a nonmachinic other,¹⁹ but a rage of the war-machine against the [Oedipal]

State-machine, a rage of the "machine against the apparatus" (*Thousand Plateaus* 352), or, in Kristeva's words, a "*rage against the Symbolic*" (*Powers* 178). The *bricoleurs* of affects joyfully combat what Foucault in his preface to *Anti-Oedipus* calls the "poor technicians of desire—psychoanalysts and semiologists of every sign and symptom—who would subjugate the multiplicity of desire to the twofold law of structure and lack" (xii-iii). Against the apparatus's law of organization, control, and representation, the *nomos* of the nomadic war machine follows a completely different, immanent operational logic of experimentation, the "nomadism of those who only assemble" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus* 24).

The war machine, I argue, can also be equated with an experimentation with the 'political options' of the child and its desire-machines. The close relationship between techno and the desiring machines of childhood is, I think, effectively staged in the 'fashion image' of the average raver: comfortable shoes with bouncy soles, oversized shirts, and baggy trousers are a kind of uniform for an active raver. As a result, the wearer looks like a full-grown toddler, promoting an image that seems to indicate a refusal to grow up and accept the rationalrestrictive world of adults. This Utopia of *childhood revisited* is expressed for example in the techno remake, by the deejay Marusha, of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow."²⁰ I think it is important to stress the fact that this is a *techno* remake, which means that what is at stake is not a childhood in terms of a digital version of an 'analog paradise regained'—rather, the track reveals paradise as an effect of a machinic assemblage of heterogeneous elements not yet overcoded by an Oedipal apparatus.²¹ The original song was featured in the movie *The Wizard of Oz*, a movie that itself relates the reality of the childish dream world to the functioning of a machine: the big, steaming, illusion machine of the [fake] wizard. Techno adds a crucial ingredient: the pre-Oedipal is already machinic, the machine is the limit, but the machine is creative, open, dynamic—limitless. It seems only natural that an individual piece of techno music is never final, is a machine that inspires new offshoots, drifts from remix to remix. Techno shows "what the conjunction AND is, neither a union, nor a juxtaposition, but the birth of a stammering, the outline of a broken line which always sets off at right angles, a sort of active and creative line of flight . . . AND . . . AND . . . AND . . ." (Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues* 9–10). This stammering is the combined effect of "loops of infinity"²² and the terrifying power of breaks and break beats: "Music has always sent out lines of flight, like so many 'transformational multiplicities,' even overturning the very codes that structure or arborify it; that is why musical form, right down to its ruptures and proliferations, is comparable to a weed, a rhizome" (*Thousand Plateaus* 11–12). Techno is not designed to form an *oeuvre*, and the producers and

deejays of techno music definitely and consciously belong to the postauthor [composer|conductor] era, not only due to the much-hailed democratization of the artistic process via affordable prices of instruments [which narrows the gap between artist and audience], but also a result of the open character of techno music itself: a techno chart buster [as a final authentic mix] is something of a paradox. As a producer [rather than an author], Deleuze stresses, “you are like a conspiracy of criminals. You are no longer an author, you are a production studio” (Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues* 9)—individual ‘authorship’ is replaced by collective enunciation. Techno deterritorializes traditional notions of intention and control [authorship], blurring and destabilizing the distinctions between composers, performers, producers, and audiences. Being more *serial* than *serious*, techno is able to proliferate endlessly and, as Jean-Jacques Lecercle has convincingly argued with respect to the work of Deleuze, “proliferation is always a threat to order” (95).

The realm of childhood also poses a serious threat to the restrictions and laws of society. Georges Bataille, in an essay on *Literature and Evil*—and on literature *as* evil—comments on the contrast between these two worlds: “Society contrasts the free play of innocence with reason, reason based on the calculation of interest. Society is governed by its will to survive. It could not survive if these childish instincts . . . were allowed to triumph. Social constraint would have required the young savages to give up their innocent sovereignty; it would have required them to comply with those reasonable adult conventions which are advantageous to the community” (18). Thus, anything that is, in the words of the English law, “likely to cause serious distress to the inhabitants of the locality”—that is, to the community—is a force operating against the Good. By equating benefit with profit, the Good with reason, Bataille can say that what is at stake is a “revolt of Evil against Good. Formally it is irrational. What does the kingdom of childhood . . . signify if not the *impossible* and ultimate death . . . ?” (19–20). Bataille, however, is a “very French author” (Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues* 47) [which Deleuze equates with the terms Oedipal, tree-like, and priestly], and he cannot but equate childhood with death. For Deleuze, the child’s creation of rhizomatics is an affirmation of life, a life that deterritorializes the axiomatics of the Oedipal register: “It is wrong to think that children are limited before all else to their parents . . . The father and mother are not the coordinates of everything that is invested by the unconscious. There is never a moment when children are not already plunged into an actual milieu in which they are moving about, and in which the parents as persons simply play the role of openers or closers of doors, guardians of thresholds, connectors or disconnectors of zones” (*Essays Critical and Clinical* 62). What Bataille calls “evil” are ultimately the creative and deterritorializing tenden-

cies of the child. According to Deleuze, "people always think of a majoritarian future (when I am grown up, when I have power)" (Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues* 5). A *becoming-minor*, in contrast, is not equal to a mimicry of "the child, the madman, the woman, the animal, the stammerer or the foreigner, but becoming all these, in order to invent new forces or new weapons" (ibid.). In techno, then, the deterritorializing strategies of child, animal, and war machine coincide.

Whereas the concepts of cyberspace and virtual reality celebrate a sovereignty of childhood without the body²³ [the death of the body is in fact the price one must pay to revisit paradise], techno celebrates judgment night' as the resurrection of the body, putting the body back into its place²⁴—a place determined not by merely *organic* [essentialist] or *representational* [cultural/linguistic constructivism] parameters, but by *machinic* parameters that go beyond the Lacanian definition of the subject as an effect of the signifier, so that the signifier "represents the subject for another signifier" (*Écrits* 316). In analogy to Guattari's redefinition of the Lacanian object *a* as a "object machine petit 'a'" (*Molecular Revolution* 115), the subject is constituted in "a pure signifying space where the machine would represent the subject for another machine" (117–18). The Lacanian object *a* is a fragment of the real [body], that 'phantom limb' exchanged for the signifier, but in a techno rave the body as a whole is [not replaced, but] affected by the machinic: techno transforms the whole body into the "object machine petit 'a.'" In this "final corporate colonization of the unconscious"²⁵ [that unconscious that "engineers, is machinic" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 53)], body and machine become one, the body is 'machined.' In connection with the ravers' use of a drug called ecstasy or E, all these references merge in the notion of the Dionysian mode of *the festive*, where techno [what Attali might call a "noise of Festival and Freedom" (*Noise* 133)] is a strategy to let a temporary and festive Body/Politic emerge. "E' makes the skin sensitive to textures" (Rietveld 54) and reduces social inhibitions and the need for private space. Thus, if "in Freudian terms, 'E' made the user return to a pre-Oedipal stage, where libidinous pleasure is not centred in the genitals, but where sexuality is polymorphous and where sensuality engages the entire body" (ibid.), in Deleuzian/Guattarian terms this means a deterritorializing of the Oedipal axiomatic toward a machinic experimentation with what a body can do, a move toward the BwO, opening the body to more [and different] levels of perceptions. For Deleuze, "what we seek in states of intoxication—drinks, drugs, ecstasies—is an antidote to . . . judgment" (*Essays Critical and Clinical* 126).²⁶

Techno produces what Hakim Bey has called a "Temporary Autonomous Zone," perhaps better thought of as a temporary festive zone, with "the

emergence of a *festal culture* removed and even hidden from the would-be managers of our leisure” (105), the event managers of the commodity-spectacle. Festive and nonrepresentational practices such as drinking, singing, or dancing combine people into a temporal and affective Body|Politic. Peter Sloterdijk has argued in *Der Starke Grund zusammen zu sein* (the strong reason for being together) that with the breakdown of the strict ideologies and totalizing systems in late capitalism, individuals can no longer be lured into permanent collectives grand narratives. Whereas nations were previously constructed in a variety of textual discourses, with the concept of the state in decline, modern societies can only be constructed and held together with appropriate doses of excitation. Modern Bodies|Politic are no longer integrated and constructed by a network of discourses; they are increasingly based on the ability to affect and be affected, and to stimulate participation. Now that the Body|Politic is a “psycho-political body of suggestion . . . of a radically autoplasmic nature” (Sloterdijk 45), representation has been replaced by excitation—and although for Sloterdijk, a sense of coherence and belonging can no longer be the result of a normative myth|narrative, he still sees mainly “powerful fictive narratives” (ibid.) at work. However, he also refers to the Body|Politic as an effect of “psycho-acoustic productions which in fact makes grow together what ‘listens itself together,’ ‘reads itself together,’ what ‘televideos itself together,’ what ‘informs itself together’” (27). The new sense of coherence—the strong reason for being together—would be the tree-like integration of these [cognitive] affectations. What techno adds is the rhizomatic structure of nonsignifying affects that does not totalize or integrate, that keeps the system open and dynamic. It is an embodiment of Nietzsche’s Dionysian mode, of pure affirmation: for Deleuze, Dionysus is he who is “able to do what the higher man cannot: to laugh, to play, and dance, in other words to affirm” (*Essays Critical and Clinical* 102)—techno as the “becoming-active” (103) of the Body|Politic.

A techno rave is an event where thousands of people dance all night, most often as a deterritorialization of public places, such as a warehouse or a factory. Jean Baudrillard has argued that the modern factory is no longer “a site for the production and realisation of commodities” (77); it has become “a site of the sign’s execution” (119). Thus, it might be no coincidence that just at the moment the factory *as such* disappears, techno usurps the empty places with its own machinics, with a production that ‘just’ produces production. In contrast to the notion of dance as being either narcissistic|autistic or ‘representative’ [of ‘natural (self-)expression’], in techno the dancing body moves beyond the pose and the object of the female gaze. In techno, dance is embedded into the ritual of the festive and relates the body

in its material, nonsignifying dimension to the machinic. Here, the subject emerges from into the crowd of ravers. Techno's fascination is grounded in its promise that although experiences cannot be shared [since every individual has an individual experience], these experiences can be celebrated and lived through in a group event that consists of the composition of such affects in the first place (see Böpple and Knüfer 179). The raving Body|Politic exists only in the actuality of the dancing bodies; it is a becoming-Body|Politic not based on an a priori community. It is an 'event'—not in the banal sense that 'something happens,' but in the Deleuzian sense of an *haecceity* [it-ness],²⁷ in that it brings a multiplicity of heterogeneous forces and elements into experimental relation with each other, both on the level of the music, and of the level of the collective Body|Politic. Haecceities are composed of "*nomadic essences, vague yet riotous; continuums of intensities or continuous variations . . . ; becomings, which have neither culmination nor subject . . . ; smooth spaces; composed from within striated space*" (*Thousand Plateaus* 507). However, the openness [both of the sonic 'product'—the mix—and of the dance movements of the crowd] is not to be mistaken as a 'subjective' expression of a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it is 'machined' in the sense that this 'event' only exists in the assemblage of heterogeneous elements, as a composition of feedback loops between sound, volume, bodies, light, drugs, intensities, affects, and so forth: "Desire has nothing to do with a natural or spontaneous determination; there is no desire but assembling, assembled desire. The rationality, the efficiency, of an assemblage does not exist without the passions the assemblage brings into play, without the desires which constitute it as much as it constitutes them" (399). Ultimately, in the connection of machinic/machined body and machinic/machined sound, the raving Body|Politic, like the BwO, is "full of gaiety, ecstasy, and dance" (150).

In addition to the notion of pre-Oedipal childhood and the pleasure of the body of the polymorphously perverse drives, which is experienced most directly in gabba and hardcore techno, there is also the experience of trance and ecstasy prevalent in goal ambient techno [which is not to say that gabba does not have its spiritual merits]. The intensity of speed and repetitive beats of Kristeva's abject—"a blasting of sight and sound" (*Powers* 155)—as a border between the human and the purely physical, connects with the Zen-like experience of trance, the border between the human and the spiritual. Both point toward what Lacan calls a "*jouissance beyond the phallus*" (*Seminar XX* 81): mysticism.²⁸ The state of trance links techno to the tradition of minimal music.²⁹ Jean-François Lyotard has pointed at the affinity between the sublime and "Minimal Art. Avant-gardism is thus present in germ in the Kantian sublime" (*Inhuman* 98). The sublime, the mystic experience,

minimal art, and techno have the following aim in common: they try to convey a fullness that cannot possibly be put into words [at least not into the words of phallic discourse]—it can only be experienced in its intensity. Minimal music revels in that kind of mystic experience of multiplicity that results in trance, where, according to Deleuze, “the subject loses its texture in favor of an infinitely proliferating patchwork” (*Essays Critical and Clinical* 77). Minimal music produces such patchworks in its exploration of repetitive structures and non-Western rituals. Steve Reich, La Monte Young, Terry Riley, and Philip Glass all indulged in marathon trance grooves, rippling with complex sonic currents, often stretching beyond the limits of endurance, producing ecstatic release through repetition. With regard to Reich, Deleuze comments on the speeds and slownesses that constitute minimal music [and techno as well]: “Is it by chance that music only knows lines and not points? It is not possible to produce a point in music. It’s nothing but becomings without future or past. Music is an anti-memory. It is full of becomings: animal-becoming, child-becoming, molecular-becoming. Steve Reich wants everything to be perceived in act in music, wants the process to be completely understood: therefore this music is the slowest, but because it makes us perceive all the differential speeds” (Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues* 33).³⁰ The complexity of the differential speeds here is the sonic equivalent of the interplay of affects and faculties in Deleuze’s reading of the Kantian sublime, which “brings the various faculties into play in such a manner that they struggle against each other” (*Essays Critical and Clinical* 34), pushing each other to [and beyond] their limits, producing the sublime feeling as “the most remote harmonics in each other, so that they form essentially dissonant accords” (35). The affective dissonance of the sublime does not link “the Self to the I” (34) in a logical temporal sequence—it is “a pathos beyond all logic” (*ibid.*).³¹

In the Body|Politic of ravers, the subject operates not according to the logic of autonomous identity but as part of an open system, part of the [war] machine.³² This Body|Politic is *not* structured by a molar attractor, by God or a *Führer*. It has been pointed out that the rhythmic structure of techno shares certain similarities with fascist *Marschmusik*. Parades, ceremonies, and spectacles have always played a central role in the construction of national identities and of a strictly hierarchical [and military], ordered view of society. Parades have played a seminal role in the nationalization of the masses, bringing politics and aesthetics close together. Such mobilization of the masses operated through festivals that integrated individuals into a historical community and continuity, commemorating the glory of the forefathers, especially military parades held in public places charged with national memory. However, in techno parades [such as the love parade],³³ what

is happening is the breakdown of traditional discursively inscribed notions of demonstrations as oppositional events, in which state power is challenged by the people and both the authorities and the demonstrators operate on the basis of clearly defined positions. Contrary to the ideological investments of social movements of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, the Body|Politic of the ravers has upset the traditional organization and representation of public space through a new type of transgression that mocks the character of traditional political demonstrations. Replacing radical, militant, and often violent political protest with peaceful carnival celebration, the love parade brought into public space a new notion of resistance beyond totalizing oppositions, simultaneously challenging traditional representations of the state apparatus and the protest of resistance politics.

What's the relation between "the authorities" and "the people" when the people occupy public streets, squares, plazas, and buildings? Do carnivals encourage giddy, drunken, sexy feelings and behavior—or does the very action of taking spaces, of liberating them, make people giddy? Is it accidental that official displays consist of neat rectangles, countable cohorts, marching past and under the fixed gaze of the reviewing stand, while unofficial mass gatherings are vortexed, whirling, full of shifting ups and downs, multi-focused events generating tension between large scale actions and many local dramas? And why is it that unofficial gatherings elicit, permit, or celebrate the erotic, while official displays are often associated with the military? Can a single dramaturgy explain political demonstrations, Mardi Gras, and similar kinds of carnivals, Spring Break Weekends, and ritual dramas? (Schechner 45–46)

Differences are present in the representational aspects, in what these masses are against, in 'what they signify.' From a purely materialistic angle, there are only differences in the masses' intensity and their degree of homogeneity or heterogeneity. It is exactly in this being "vortexed, whirling" where self-organization occurs. As a war machine, techno is a *becoming-revolutionary* in so far as it forms new alliances, in which a 'symbolic' belonging to state, nation or ideology, race, class, or gender gives way to a multiplicity of elective [and also affective] communities not based on the representation of One-ness, but on "the investment by desire of the social field" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 61). It is a liberatory|revolutionary force, and not 'just' a fashion|youth culture. The contrast between the war machine and the state army is also captured in Deleuze's conceptualization of 'combat' versus 'war.' *War* is a "combat-against" (*Essays Critical and Clinical* 133) that destroys and enforces 'judgment' [as a containment and fixation of force], whereas *combat* is a 'combat-between,' a dynamic interchange of forces, "the process through which a force enriches itself by seizing hold

of other forces and joining itself to them in a new ensemble” (132). The war machine—the combat—is a becoming, and it is only through this becoming [becoming-child, becoming-animal, becoming-madman] “that the combatant can lash out ‘against’ his enemy, in league with all the allies this other combat has given to him” (ibid.). This joining of forces for Deleuze creates a power that consists of one mode’s encountering “other existing modes that agree with it and bring[ing] their relation into composition with its relation” (*Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* 100). It depends on the ability to affect and be affected: power, in the Spinozist sense, is based on joy. Joy ‘composes’ a more powerful individual, and music can increase that power:

I put on music that I like, there, my whole body, and my soul—it goes without saying—composes its relations with the resonant relations. This is what is meant by the music that I like: my power is increased. So for Spinoza, what interests me therein is that, in the experience of joy, there is never the same thing as in sadness, there is not at all an investment—and we’ll see why—there is not at all an investment of one hardened part which would mean that a certain quantity of power (*puissance*) is subtracted from my power (*pouvoir*). There is not, why? Because when the relations are composed, the two things of which the relations are composed, form a superior individual, a third individual which encompasses and takes them as parts. In other words, with regard to the music that I like, everything happens as if the direct composition of relations (you see that we are always in the criteria of the direct) a direct composition of relations is made, in such a way that a third individual is constituted, individual of which me, or the music, are no more than a part. I would say, from now on, that my power (*puissance*) is in expansion, or that it increases. (Deleuze, “Seminar on Spinoza 201011981”)

And Deleuze drives home his point in the *Abécédaire*, a series of interviews with Claire Parnet, in the entry “J as in Joy”: “Spinoza turned joy into a concept of resistance and life: let us avoid sad passions, let us live with joy in order to be at the maximum of our force.” Thus, according to Deleuze and Guattari, “it may be that the sound molecules of pop music are at this very moment implanting here and there a people of a new type, singularly indifferent to the orders of the radio, to computer safeguards, to the threat of the atomic bomb” (*Thousand Plateaus* 346).