An Ethico-Aesthetics of Injecting Drug Use:
Body, Space, Memory, Capital.

Peta Husper Malins

Submitted in total fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

March 2009

School of Social and Political Sciences
The University of Melbourne
Abstract

Harm minimisation approaches to illicit drug use have proven extremely successful in reducing drug-related harm and improving health outcomes for those using drugs, their families and the broader community. Despite these successes, however, many harm minimisation programmes face strong community opposition, and many others are limited in their effectiveness by their reluctance to acknowledge the complex ways in which drug using contexts, social relationships, desire, pleasure and aesthetics are involved in the production and reduction of drug-related harm.

Deleuze and Guattari’s ethico-aesthetic philosophy offers a conceptual framework through which to begin to grapple with the sensory and affective elements of illicit drug use and their implications for an embodied ethics. Following an introduction to their key concepts, this thesis explores the implications of their ontology for understandings of injecting drug use across four inter-related dimensions: the drug-using body; urban spaces of injecting; public overdose memorials; and drug-referenced, ‘heroin chic’ advertising imagery. It argues that aesthetics and ethics are complexly intertwined, and that ethically positive responses to drug use require an active appreciation of the ways in which aesthetics affect bodies and their capacities to form relations with others.
Declaration

This is to certify that:

the thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD;
due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used;
this thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Signed ________________________________ Date ___________________
Acknowledgements

I would like, first of all, to thank Associate Professor John Fitzgerald: an inspiring, passionate and rhizomatic teacher who got me interested in Deleuze and drugs (or rather, the Deleuzian study of drugs) in the first place. And to my equally inspiring, and ever-patient supervisors, Professor Alison Young and Associate Professor Mark Halsey, thank you for your expert guidance and support. Your attention to detail and your enthusiasm for adventures in poststructural aesthetics have certainly been appreciated.

I would also like to thank all the women who kindly agreed to be interviewed for this research. Your generosity meant a lot to me. Thanks especially to the woman with the young child who insisted on buying me a coffee. I am also indebted to the women whom I interviewed for my earlier Honours research, and to the many clients of the Foot Patrol Needle and Syringe Program with whom I was able to meet over the course of my work and fieldwork. Thanks also to Michelle Thompson and all the staff at Foot Patrol who supported this research, allowing me to join them on outreach shifts and assisting with recruitment.

I am especially grateful to all my colleagues and friends from Criminology, particularly the ‘salon’ crew: Dr Antonia Quadara, Dr Barbara Hunter, Dave McDonald, Jane Gardam, Dr Kirsty Duncanson, Dr Nesam MacMillan and Dr Nicola Henry. Your friendship, support, enthusiasm and critical feedback have been invaluable. Thanks also to my dear friends Chelsii Bear, Felicity Colman, Helene Frichot, Dr Anna Hickey-Moody, Meredith Kratzmann, Deana Leahy, Dr Mary Lou Rasmussen, Annette Thompson, and Nicola Wylie whose wisdom, generosity and love have, in various ways, made this thesis possible. A special elephant stamp in particular to Anna, for providing all sorts of exciting encounters with Deleuze and deterritorialisation, for insightful discussions and feedback, and for being an extra super friend.

Finally, a great big thanks to Gregor Husper: for his love, creativity and ongoing support.
# Contents

*List of Figures*  
ix

**Introduction: Ethico-Aesthetics**  
1

1. Tracing and Mapping  
9
2. Desiring Bodies  
45
3. Spatial Folds  
70
4. Nomad Memories  
106
5. The Art of Capitalism  
146

**Conclusions: Toward an Ethico-Aesthetics of Drug Use**  
182

*References*  
189

*Appendices:*

1. Interview Methodology  
207
2. Figures  
209
List of Figures

Figure 1. Australian Government National Drugs Campaign 2007 Poster
Figure 2. Baptist Place, Melbourne
Figure 3. Sue-Anne Ware’s *Anti-Memorial to Heroin Overdose* – stencilled tributes
Figure 4. Sue-Anne Ware’s *Anti-Memorial to Heroin Overdose* – planter box
Figure 5. Sue-Anne Ware’s *Anti-Memorial to Heroin Overdose* – resin plaque
Figure 6. Spontaneous Overdoes Memorial tribute, Melbourne
Figure 7. Spontaneous Overdoes Memorial shrine, Melbourne
Figure 8. Nicholas Low’s *Clean* – Poster
Figure 9. Nicholas Low’s *Clean* – Wallpapered laneway
Figure 10. Nicholas Low’s *Clean* – Speakers
Figure 11. Dior *Addict* Perfume Advertisement
Figure 12. Yves Saint Laurent *Opium* Perfume Advertisement
Figure 13. Gucci *Rush* Perfume Advertisement
Figure 14. Corinne Day’s *Georgina, Brixton*
Figure 15. Corinne Day *Georgina, Brixton*
Figure 16. Mario Sorrenti’s *Keren*
Figure 17. Paolo Roversi’s *Stella Tenant*
Figure 18. Francis Bacon’s *Three Portraits Triptych, 1973* (panels 2 and 3)
Figure 19. Francis Bacon’s *Portrait of George Dyer Talking, 1966*
Figure 20. Francis Bacon’s *Study after Velázquez’s Portraits of Pope Innocent X, 1953*
Figure 21. Francis Bacon’s *Triptych May-June, 1973* (panels 1 and 3)
Figure 22. Francis Bacon’s *Henrietta Moraes (Lying Figure with Hypodermic Syringe), 1963*
Figure 23. Francis Bacon’s *Version No.2 of Lying Figure with Hypodermic Syringe, 1968*
Figure 24. Juergen Teller’s *Charlotte Rampling, Paris*
Figure 25. Adbusters’ Spoof Advertisement for Calvin Klein’s *Obsession* Perfume
Figure 26. Mario Sorrenti, *Francis Bacon I, II, III, IV*
Establishing ways of existing or styles of life isn’t just an aesthetic matter, it’s what Foucault called ethics...

(Deleuze 1995: 100)
Introduction: Ethico-Aesthetics

In 2007, the Australian National Government launched a television, billboard and poster campaign which depicted – to visceral excess – the potential effects of using an illicit drug called ‘ice’. In the various television advertisements, a young man is shown twitching nervously from lack of sleep, while another fights with his mother, knocking her to the floor in a violent outburst. A young woman picks at red, weeping sores on her arm and face, believing – as the voice-over tells us – that there are bugs crawling under her skin (see Figure 1). And in a hospital waiting room, a young man, sweating and agitated, suddenly strikes out at a nurse, hurls a metal rubbish bin across the room at a window, and then screams while being wrestled to the floor by police.

For those who have never come into contact with anyone using ice – or at least, anyone who seems anything like the psychotic young people in the advertisement – these visceral sound-images of wide-eyed paranoia, weeping, infected lesions, shattered glass, chaotic violence, and animal-like suffering must have a profound affect on their perceptions of the drug and its consumers. Ice, or ‘crystal methamphetamine’ as it is officially known, is presented as being be far more addictive and volatile than most drugs people might be familiar with, and those who use it are depicted as not only completely dependent, but also irrational, violent and psychotic. Both the drug and its consumers, the advertisement suggests, are extremely dangerous and are to be judiciously avoided.

I begin with this account – and with an image of one of the posters which accompanied the campaign – because they provide a good example of the capacity for sounds and images to shape relations between bodies, impacting upon how other bodies are thought about and connected to. Most methamphetamine and crystal methamphetamine consumers do not pick holes in their skin, nor do they have psychotic or violent outbursts (Lee et al 2007: 1-12; see also McKetin et al 2006). Although the 3% of methamphetamine users in Australia who use the drug regularly (several times a week or more) are likely to experience negative health and social effects, the vast majority of consumers simply experiment with it, along with a range
of other drugs, whilst continuing to get on with their life, family, job, socialising, and so on (Lee et al 2007: 1-12). Most do not reach the extreme examples of psychosis and violence depicted to such visceral affect in the Australian Government’s anti-drug campaign.

The use of extreme images such as these to deter young people from taking drugs is a common governmental strategy. Such sensationalism does little to convince people that there is a rational basis for avoiding drugs, and tends to be viewed with skepticism by young people, particularly those who already use drugs or associate with people who do (Duff 2003: 293). What such images do very successfully, however, is produce anxiety and fear (Lupton 1995: 106, 112; Sherr 1990). Not only fear of drugs and drug users, but also a more generalised sense of unease, which then provides valuable fuel for government re-election campaigns based on tough ‘war on drugs’ and ‘war on terror’ policy platforms (Steinert 2003; Chevigny 2003).

As Lupton (1995) notes, such advertising strategies ‘provide a cost-effective means of demonstrating that the state considers the issue to be a ‘problem’ and is working to do something about it’ (125). In doing so, they rarely draw attention to the social, economic, legal and environmental factors associated with ill-health and drug-related harm, but instead place the focus of responsibility directly on the individual (125, 127; see also Keane 2003: 231).

While the fear generated by these kinds of advertisements may be successful in temporarily increasing the proportion of people who are opposed to taking drugs, or who are supportive of harsh anti-drug policies, their impact on the numbers of people who actually end up taking drugs is less clear (Barber and Grichting 1990; Lau and Kane 1980; Sherr 1990; Wallack 1981). And what is rarely considered when developing and evaluating such strategies is the impact they might have on an ethics of social relations. This is despite the fact that researchers have long argued that the use of shock-tactics, extreme imagery and discriminatory clichés can create and reinforce boundaries between people – particularly between those who are considered to be ‘normal’, and those who are considered different or strange (Brown 2000: 1274;

---

1 During 2007, leading up to the federal election, the Australian government produced a series of shock-tactic information campaigns, including one on terrorism, one on internet child-sex predators, and the one on drugs already mentioned.
Lupton 1995: 158). Australia’s now infamous ‘Grim Reaper’ television campaign of 1987, for example, which used confronting images of ‘everyday’ people being knocked over, ten pin bowling-style, by the ‘Grim Reaper’ of AIDS, drew a great deal of criticism, with many drawing attention to its stigmatising potential (Lupton 1995: 114-116). The recent ‘ice’ advertisements described above are also likely to increase fear of – and discrimination towards – those who use drugs. By producing the drug-using subject as diseased, psychotic, unpredictable and irrational, such advertisements work to reduce our capacity and willingness to connect to those who use drugs and to understand their reasons for doing so. As such, they are likely to reduce our ability to comprehend the complexity of the problems surrounding drug use, and our capacity to critically reflect on our own role, via policy and practice, in the emergence and continuation of these problems.

All images produce social and political effects. Photographs, drawings, paintings, films, television shows and advertisements: all have an impact on the ways in which people feel, think and interact in the social world. Far from being separate or antithetical to ethical concerns, as many social scientists, policy-makers and practitioners seem to assume, aesthetics matters ethically. Thinkers in fields as diverse as cultural studies, cinema studies, art history, gender studies and feminist theory have long demonstrated this socio-political importance of the visual field. Many too, have pointed out that the visual realm – long privileged in Western thought (Falk 1997; Jay 1993) – is not the only aesthetic field to produce political affects. Often overlooked are the ways in which the other senses – sound, touch, smell and taste – also impact upon social interactions (Falk 1997). The way a person speaks, the way a body smells, the way a skin feels: all shape the possibilities for engagement, connection and change in a given encounter. The taste of a food, the atmosphere or temperature in a room, the layout of a city: all reduce or enhance bodily capacities and the types of encounters that are possible.

That there is a relationship between ethics and aesthetics is neither revolutionary nor novel. Indeed, it is a relationship which has formed the basis of much Eastern philosophy and culture. It has also been given substantial attention within some areas of Western thought – most notably within Continental philosophy and within disciplines such as art theory, literature, architecture, social geography and
psychoanalysis. More recently it has also come to the fore in the humanities, particularly through feminism and gender studies, cultural studies and critical legal theory. Within the social sciences, however, where constructivist approaches have increasingly replaced traditional positivist views of social ‘reality’, there remains a tendency to focus upon language and discourse – rather than aesthetics, emotion or affect – in theorising the production of these ‘realities’ (Barad 2003, Lupton 1998). This tendency to privilege discourse above materiality and sensation has also been strong within criminology, where media and discourse analyses have proved extremely popular ways of demonstrating the socially constructed nature of crime and criminality.

Contemporary critical criminologists and legal theorists, have, however, increasingly begun to explore the role of the material world – the body, sensation, aesthetics – in producing criminological and sociological realities. Drawing on insights from gender studies, cultural studies and philosophy, these theorists have begun to demonstrate the importance of aesthetics to the study of crime and criminal justice. Researchers have shown, for example, how perceptions of race, class, gender and age shape how crimes, and potential crimes, are policed (see for example: Cunneen 2001; Weitzer and Tuch 2006). They have shown how courtroom aesthetics affect interactions and outcomes within the criminal justice system (see for example: Mulcahy 2007; Perry 2001). And they have shown the extent to which films (see for example: Black 2001; Moran 2004, Young 2007), detective fiction (Young 1996), language (Goodrich 2004, Young 1996), art (Nead 1999, Young 2000), graffiti (Young 2005), media representations (Sherwin 2002, Young 1996 and 2005) and advertising (Young 1996) all impact upon community perceptions of, and responses to, crime and law.

In relation to illicit drug use, however, the connection between aesthetics and ethics still remains largely unacknowledged and under explored. While many literary writers, artists, film-makers and musicians have explored the aesthetics of drug use,2

---

2 Examples include: writers and poets such as Thomas De Quincey, Samuel Coleridge, Aldous Huxley, Burroughs, Timothy Leary; musicians such as Lou Reed and Kurt Cobain; film-makers such as Danny Boyle (Trainspotting), Gus Van Sant (Drugstore Cowboy), Uli Edel (Christiane F) and Darren Aronofsky (Requiem for a Dream); and artists such as Nan Goldin and Eugene Richards.
and many drug researchers have explored the ethics of drug use and drug policy, few have examined the intersection of these two realms. With the exception of several notable researchers, few have taken into consideration, for example, the ways in which the aesthetic, sensory, spatial and affective aspects of drug use and drug use policy might impact upon the production and negotiation of risk or the production of health and wellbeing more broadly. For the most part, aesthetics has been forced aside: bracketed off in the pursuit of a kind of ‘pure’ or ‘rational’ ethics of harm minimisation, risk reduction, treatment or prevention.

This bracketing off has in some ways been extremely useful. Harm minimisation advocates have been able to present convincing, scientific evidence of the health and economic benefits of a range of important, yet highly controversial, public health initiatives (Irwin and Fry 2007: 77; Hunt 2003). Such evidence has enabled initiatives such as needle and syringe programs, which provide sterile injecting equipment and health advice to injecting drug users, to be established around the world. The success of such programs in reducing the spread of blood-borne viruses such as HIV and hepatitis is by now well established (Dolan et al 2005).

Yet despite all the rational evidence supporting such programs, there remains a great deal of political, media and community opposition and fear. Most countries still do not have needle and syringe services, notwithstanding escalating numbers of syringe-mediated HIV infections. And where successful needle and syringe programs do exist, they regularly come under public and political attack: their continued existence ever-reliant on the whim of political manoeuvering (Fitzgerald 2007: 12; Beletsky et al 2008). Rational, evidence-based arguments about the public health benefits of such harm minimisation initiatives simply do not seem to be enough to reliably overcome political, economic, and social unease (Fitzgerald and Threadgold 2004: 408).

This is primarily because illicit drug use, particularly injecting drug use, evokes strong emotional and affective responses (Malins and Kratzmann 2007: 161, 163).

---

4 These include: Heather Brooke, Catherine Dale, Cameron Duff, John Fitzgerald, Suzanne Fraser Helen Keane, Richard Klein, Deborah Lupton, and Desmond Manderson. The work of most of these writers will be explored at various points later in this thesis.
These responses are neither ‘rational’ nor logical, but visceral and corporeal. They have less to do with knowledge or evidence, than with affect and aesthetics. Yet they can have significant social, political and ethical implications. Melbourne City Council’s decision in June 2000 to reject a proposal to establish a supervised injecting facility in Melbourne’s Central Business District, provides a good case in point. Despite having been presented with overwhelming evidence regarding the public health and amenity benefits of such facilities – which reduce overdose fatalities and illness by providing a medically supervised space for injection – and despite having given in-principal support during the week leading up to the decision, the councilors voted 8 to 1 against the proposal.\(^5\) One of the primary reasons? On the morning of the Council vote, Melbourne’s main tabloid newspaper, the *Herald Sun*, printed a stark image of the proposed injecting facility on their front page. Public fear, made manifest via tabloid imagery and language, quickly overwhelmed ‘rational’ evidence, and the proposal was defeated (Mendes 2004: 27).

The aesthetic and affective realm of drug use cannot, therefore, be separated from questions of social politics and ethics. The appearance of a drug user, the shape or colour of a needle and syringe, the look or feel or sound of a safe injecting facility: all have the capacity to impact upon social relations. Bracketing off questions of aesthetics in the pursuit of a ‘pure science’ of harm minimisation will only go so far. To the extent that researchers and campaigners fail to take into account the aesthetic aspects of both ethics and drug use, they will remain limited in their capacity to move beyond the policy impasse in which they find themselves. They will also remain limited in their capacity to address the inadequacies, or unintended consequences, of any harm reduction initiatives they seek to introduce. An appreciation of the ethico-aesthetics of drug use will be crucial, for example, if harm reduction initiatives are to begin to address not only those harms which are already knowable, but also those harms which – although very real – are not yet perceptible within current knowledge frameworks and discursive structures. It will also enable, if not compel, harm reduction practitioners to acknowledge their role not only in reducing specific, located harms, but also in shaping relations between bodies and spaces more broadly.

The aim of this thesis is to explore the aesthetic aspects of drug use and the ways in which these aesthetics might be understood to matter – socially, politically and ethically. Focusing specifically on injecting drug use, this thesis explores aesthetics across four sensory and affective realms: the injecting drug-using body; the spaces of injecting drug use; public overdose memorialisation; and drug-referenced advertising. To do so, it draws primarily upon the work of poststructural philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, whose concepts – developed in both their separate and collaborative texts – offer some of the most useful tools for connecting ethics and aesthetics and, in doing so, imagining drug use, and the drug-using body, differently.

With the exception, again, of several notable researchers, few have drawn on the work of Deleuze and Guattari in the drugs field.6 This is perhaps largely due to the unfamiliar terms and concepts these philosophers introduce: concepts which do not easily fit within existing frameworks in the drugs research field. It is also likely to be result of a common misapprehension surrounding Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy: a sense that it is too abstract or esoteric to have practical, ethical implications. In this thesis I will show that Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy does indeed have practical implications, and that it can offer important lessons for how we think about – and respond to – drug use and drug-related harms.

But how do we currently think about and respond to injecting drug use? In what social, historical and political contexts does this thesis – as an intervention – emerge? How will it work and what, exactly, will it hope to achieve? In Chapter 1, Tracing and Mapping, I address these questions by placing contemporary drug policy, and this current research project, into socio-political context. Beginning with a brief history of drug use and drug policy, I then outline some of the problems with the criminal justice, medical and harm minimisation policy frameworks which remain dominant today. Focusing on harm minimisation, which I suggest is the most relevant framework to an ethico-aesthetics, I examine its conceptual limitations and the implications these hold for current and future policy and practice. I then suggest some of the ways in which Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy of ethico-aesthetics might

---

6 Exceptions here include: Catherine Dale, John Fitzgerald, Suzanne Fraser, Tim Jordan, Helen Keane, and Christopher Moreno, most of whose work will be explored in more detail at various points later in this thesis.
assist in rethinking – and reinvigorating – harm minimisation. Finally I outline what might be called an ethico-aesthetic methodology, and in doing so, explain exactly what this thesis will and won’t do, and what it hopes to achieve.

The following four chapters are then devoted to exploring, through Deleuze and Guattari, each of the four different aesthetic fields – Body, Space, Memory and Capital – which I have chosen to focus upon in this thesis. In Chapter 2, Desiring Bodies, the focus is upon the body – specifically the injecting drug-using body – and the ways in which Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts might be used to think differently about the body’s relations, actions and capacities. The relationship between the injecting drug-using body and space then becomes the focus of Chapter 3, Spatial Folds. Here I draw on interviews with women who regularly inject in the public spaces of inner-city Melbourne to explore the ways in which urban space interacts with those who inject within it. The installation of public overdose memorials is one of the more visible ways in which those who inject drugs inscribe urban space. In Chapter 4, Nomad Memories, I focus in on these various memorial inscriptions – from those which are personal, spontaneous or temporary, to those which are more official, planned or permanent – and the ways in which they impact – spatially and temporally – on bodily relations. Chapter 5, The Art of Capitalism, then turns to the aesthetics of capitalist advertising, and to a study of the advertising images which reference injecting drug use in order to market their product or brand. In this chapter I look not only at the implications of such advertising for injecting drug user bodies, but also for relations between bodies more broadly. Finally, in Conclusions: Toward an Ethico-Aesthetics of Drug Use, I bring these four aesthetic realms together, connecting their various ethico-aesthetic threads and examining their broader implications. I do so not in order to conclude, or to provide closure, but to offer a launching-space for opening out onto new ethico-aesthetic explorations of drug use and other criminological, social and ethical issues.
During my teenage and undergraduate years, I earned most of my income working as a drug dealer of sorts: serving coffees at various hip (and some not so hip) cafes around Melbourne. I also spent much of that time drinking coffee – usually around two or three a day – as well as exploring the joys of spirits, beer (‘dollar pots’ during university orientation week were particularly memorable) and, more recently, good wine. I have tried various illicit psychoactive substances (which I won’t detail here), have often taken pain-killers for study-induced headaches, and have even had the occasional cigarette. I have had a great time with all these drugs, and have never run into any trouble with them: that is, they have never come to impact on my life negatively – save for the odd hangover – and I am glad to have had the opportunity to enjoy them.

For most people in the Western world today, particularly those living in urban centres, the consumption of psychoactive drugs such as these is a relatively common and largely taken-for-granted part of everyday life. A coffee or tea in the morning; a glass of wine in the evening; a beer and cigarette at the pub. An aspirin for a headache; some pseudoephedrine to clear the nose; or a valium to get through the week. Depending on your tastes, you might prefer an ‘e’ to go out dancing; some red-bull or coca-cola to shake off a hang-over; some speed to get through a night shift; or a joint to chill out after dinner. Cocaine, LSD, methamphetamine, heroin, methadone, codeine, benzodiazepine, vodka, scotch and espresso: all are today regularly consumed – often in combination – by a large and diverse range of people.

Also generally taken-for-granted is the fact that, while some of these drugs are readily and commercially available, others are available on prescription only, and many are internationally prohibited: their sale and consumption constituting a crime. These regulatory distinctions are, however, relatively recent historical developments, and are far less natural and self-evident than they often tend to seem. It is worth, therefore,
taking a moment to examine the history of the emergence of these policy frameworks so as to place contemporary regulation practices – particularly those in Australia – into their global and historical context.

The title of this chapter, *Tracing and Mapping*, arises from a methodological distinction Deleuze and Guattari make between ‘tracing’, or describing existing relations, and ‘mapping’, or planning out a future (1987: 12-15). Tracing, in other words, refers to the process whereby one outlines or sketches things ‘as they are’, such that one can get a sense of the lay of the land and its limitations. In tracing, one draws attention to the problems within existing relations, and might even begin to dismantle or ‘erase’ them – but one does nothing yet to provide alternatives. As Deleuze and Guattari suggest, ‘what the tracing reproduces… are only the impasses, blockages… or points of structuration’ (13). Mapping, by contrast, refers to the creative and experimental processes whereby new trajectories and connections – new lines and possibilities – are forged. Mappings act upon the world, producing new ways of thinking and acting; new potentials for life. Deleuze and Guattari write:

> What distinguishes a map from a tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real… The map is open and connectible in all its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification… It can be drawn on a wall, conceived as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation… the map has to do with performance (12).

Despite the inherent problems Deleuze and Guattari identify with tracing – particularly its tendency to reduce the chaos and multiplicity of the world to a single image of ‘reality’ or ‘truth’ – it is, I believe, necessary to begin with some sort of tracing, in order that a map can begin to be fashioned. Intended, therefore, as both a tracing and a mapping, this chapter provides a critical sketch of the ways in which drugs have so far been understood and regulated, and then offers the beginnings of an alternative theoretical trajectory via Deleuze and Guattari. The tracing component offers a brief – and necessarily selective – history of psychoactive drugs, including the emergence of criminal justice, medical and harm minimisation approaches to drug regulation, as well as a more detailed exploration of some of the limitations and

---

7 The history detailed here must simply be understood as one version of many, many possible versions. I have simply selected what I see as the most useful aspects to mention, and explained them in the way that I believe to be most useful.
implications of these models. The mapping component comprises an introduction to
Deleuze and Guattari’s ethico-aesthetic project, the methodological implications of
their project for this thesis, and some preliminary gestures toward what an ethico-
aesthetics of injecting drug use might look like.

A Brief and Selective History of Drugs

Nearly all communities throughout history have used drugs of some sort, depending
on the plants and technologies available to them. There is evidence, for example, of
human consumption of drugs dating back to the Stone Age (Kersey 1994: 64).
Cannabis was inhaled as far back as at least 7000 BC, when it was used as an incense
by the Assyrians (64), while opium use has been documented at around 1600 BC,
when Neolithic peoples in central Europe harvested opium poppies for their medicinal
and psychoactive properties (Courtwright 2001: 31). In the North Americas,
mescaline from cacti has long been eaten to assist with spiritual connections, while in
the Andes, people have for centuries chewed on coca leaves to help them work
(Kersey 1994: 64). Drug use has also been documented among animals, with water
buffalo found eating opium poppies in South East Asia, llamas eating coca leaves in
the Andes, and elephants eating fermented fruit in Africa (24).

This long history of drug-taking has remained – for the most part – outside the realm
of legal governance. Where regulation did occur, it was only ever at the micro level,
via local moral customs, rituals and social conventions. Formal, large scale
governance of drug use did not begin to emerge until around the 1600 and 1700s,
when developments in agriculture, processing and global transport enabled
psychoactive substances to enter international commodity markets, and governments
began to subject drugs to economic regulation via taxation and trade laws
(Courtwright 2001: 8). During this time, the primary concern of drug taxation and
regulation was not to reduce drug use, but to ensure that profits were maximised and
that demand remained high. By the 1800s, countries such as Britain and the US had
established monopolies on particular drugs, such as tea, coffee and opium, and were
reaping millions in taxation dollars from the trade every year (2001; see also Blake
During the 1800s, however, increasing concerns began to be raised regarding the effects of unregulated, widespread drug use (Blake 2007: 30-6; Booth 1996: 192). Significant advances in chemistry and medicine – including the discovery and isolation of alkaloids such as morphine from opium and cocaine from coca; the discovery and production of high potency semi-synthetic drugs such as heroin (made by adding acetyl molecules to morphine);\(^8\) and the development of the hypodermic syringe – meant that a range of increasingly powerful drugs, and modes of drug-delivery, were now available (Courtwright 2001: 76-7). These developments, combined with advances in industrial production, cheaper prices, a burgeoning international trade and intensive drug marketing strategies, worked to ensure that by the end of the 1800s an extensive range of drugs were widely available – and just as widely consumed – throughout most areas of the industrial world (173). Although most of these drugs were marketed and sold as medical treatments and cures,\(^9\) with sales often restricted to registered doctors and pharmacists,\(^10\) they were increasingly being found to have significant ill-effects on health and well-being (166-86; Booth 1996: 193).

Yet health was not the only drug-related issue creating unease during this period. Excessive use of drugs – particularly alcohol and opiates – was also thought to be having an increasingly negative impact on morality, with English missionaries in China arguing that the opium trade was hampering their efforts at converting the Chinese to Christianity (Blake 2007: 30). Concerns also began to be voiced about the impacts of intoxication and drug-related illnesses on local workplace safety and efficiency (Courtwright 2001: 178). As Courtwright notes, industrialisation had created powerful and vocal capitalists for whom the drug trade was no longer profitable. Not only was the drugs trade absorbing consumer money, it was also negatively affecting worker productivity (178). Victorian era elites thus began to tie

---

\(^8\) Heroin was first synthesised in London in 1874, but was not marketed until around 1898 when German drug company Bayer named it ‘Heroin’ (after the German word *heroisch* meaning ‘heroic’) and began marketing it as a powerful painkiller (Booth 1996: 77).

\(^9\) Including not only opium, cocaine and marijuana, but also tobacco, wine and spirits (see Courtwright 2001)

\(^10\) The consumption of drugs was not subject to any formal restriction or criminal sanction (Courtwright 2001). Non-medical use was, at most, simply frowned-upon except where such use – in China for example - ensured Colonial powers a docile labour market (see Courtwright 2001).
medical and moral reprobation explicitly together, arguing that drug use diminished both physical health and moral capabilities (181). These arguments were almost always tied to class and race. Rising immigration into the West, and increasing anxieties over job insecurity and cultural diversification, meant that those drugs consumed by poorer ethnic immigrants tended to produce the greatest moral condemnation and fear (Booth 1996: 193).

These mounting medical, commercial, moral and xenophobic concerns surrounding the drug trade thus began, by the early 1900s, to generate a significant international shift in governmental policy (Courtwright 2001: 171-3; Booth 1996: 196-8). Despite the lucrative taxation revenues provided by the commercial drug trade, and the international powers it afforded, Western governments began to make moves toward significantly restricting the industry (Courtwright 2001: 167). It was at this point that certain drugs first became legally prohibited and certain forms of drug use began to be criminalised. The uneven ways in which these regulatory shifts played out across different types of drugs and forms of drug use were never simply related to health, but were connected to socio-political processes of economics, political electioneering, class struggle and racism (166-207; Kersey 1994, 63-75; Blake 2007: 36). The types of drugs which became prohibited were shaped by Western fears of contagion, and anxieties regarding the dissolution of Western subjectivity and sovereignty (Blake 2007: 36-7). Racist attitudes toward Chinese migrant communities, for example, led to opium smoking – which was popular amongst the Chinese – being criminalised in both the US and Australia well before other forms of opium consumption (Courtwright 2001: 177). ‘Therapeutic’ and recreational use of liquid opium and heroin amongst the white middle and upper class majority, for example, was not prohibited in Australia until 1953 (Kersey 1994: 71). The fact that alcohol and tobacco – thriving industries in the West during the 1900s – managed to largely avoid prohibition, despite being, in many respects, the most harmful of all drugs, yet cocaine, opiates, and marijuana (predominantly produced in Southern Asia and South America) became almost uniformly prohibited, can also in large part be explained by discriminatory economic geography (Courtwright 2001: 191). These race and class based distinctions are still discernable within drug policy today, shaping not only the
types of drugs which remain prohibited, but also the penalties associated with their use and sale, and the ways in which they are policed (Blake 2007: 38).

**Contemporary Medico-Legal Frameworks**

Today, a range of psychoactive substances – including cannabis, psilocybin (magic mushrooms), LSD, cocaine, heroin, opium, ecstasy, speed and methamphetamines – remain prohibited in most countries around the world. Their cultivation, manufacture, possession, trafficking, sale and use all constitute criminal offences. Yet despite their illegality, and perhaps in many cases because of it, these drugs continue to be produced, trafficked and used by large numbers of diverse people. One of the most common ways in which governments have responded to their continued use has been to strengthen law enforcement efforts: increasing police resources and prison sentences. During the mid-1980s, for example, the US government launched its first official ‘war’ on drugs: a conservative, morally-charged and politically appealing policy of strengthened law enforcement, increased sentences and ‘zero tolerance’ for drug users, dealers and traffickers (Courtwright: 2001: 200). The political success of this type of ‘war’, has led to its appearance in various guises around the world. In Australia, for example, similar ‘wars’ have been mobilised including the ‘Tough on Drugs’ campaign which was launched in 1997.

Despite the huge sums of money spent on these ‘wars’, particularly on increased law enforcement, court time and prison populations, they have had very little, if any, success in preventing illicit drug trade and use (see for example: Baum 1997; Chambliss 1995). Trafficking and manufacture continue to flourish, often via corrupt networks of high level government and law enforcement endorsement. Illicit drug use continues to grow – particularly within border areas and countries with transitioning economies. Instead what these drug wars have produced is a wide range of negative social and health-related impacts, all of which have been raced, classed, and gendered in their effects (see for example: Baum 1997; Chambliss 1995). In the US, for example, where the drug war has been the most persistent and robust, over four hundred thousand people – mostly African-American and Hispanic – were imprisoned for drug related offences by the mid-1990s (Courtwright 2001: 201). By pushing the
drug trade ‘underground’, such policies also tend to result in an increase in drug prices, an increase in crime and violence, a decrease in drug quality and consistency and a decrease in those willing to seek medical assistance in relation to their drug use (see for example: Baum 1997; Chambliss 1995). In relation to injecting drug use, intensive law enforcement practices also tend to increase: unsafe and rushed injecting; the re-use of injecting equipment (and hence the spread of blood-borne viruses); the number of inappropriately discarded syringes; and the likelihood of overdose deaths (Maher and Dixon 1999). And in many countries, including the US, zero-tolerance approaches to injecting have exacerbated, rather than reduced, rates of injecting-related HIV/AIDS (see for example: Baum 1997; Chambliss 1995).

Alongside law enforcement, medical and psychological models of ‘addiction’ and ‘treatment’ continue to influence formal responses to illicit drug use. These models tend to pathologise drug use, treating it as an illness or disease that needs to be fixed, rather than a crime that needs to be punished. Support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) – which treat drug use and drug-related problems as a permanent disease which can never be cured, but only be kept at bay through constant vigilance and full abstinence – have become extremely popular world-wide. At the same time, a range of chemical detoxification treatments, which aim to purge the body of drugs and of desire for drugs, have been developed and popularised. Despite their clear differences from crimino-legal models, addiction models have been able to very easily co-exist with, and be incorporated within, dominant law enforcement policy frameworks (O’Malley 2004: 155). In most Western countries, for example, the criminal justice system incorporates coercive treatment and/or self-help programs as part of its sentencing options or requirements. This symbiotic relationship is possible because both models are based in a moral framework that sees drug use as inherently bad. Although they take different approaches to the cause of the evil, and to its solution, they nonetheless see no value in drug use itself.

Human rights and civil libertarian campaigners have mounted powerful arguments against both prohibition and coercive treatment policies, condemning their infringements on personal freedoms and health and well-being (see for example:
Szasz 1992). Such arguments, however, have had very little success in dismantling the machinery of these dominant drug policies (Courtwright 2001: 201). One of the reasons for this is perhaps that such arguments do not seek to actually dismantle the dominant underlying belief that illicit drugs are fundamentally and intrinsically bad for those using them and for society. Instead, the problem is posed in relation to ideals of liberty, rights and freedoms. Those who see such drugs as intrinsically bad – even those who generally support the idea of rights – are perhaps unlikely to find themselves able to agree with the idea that people should have the right to ‘harm’ themselves, their families and society. And because legalisation is often posited in these debates as the only alternative to current medico-legal models, people’s fear of entirely unregulated and rampant use of drugs is likely to be operating to preclude acceptance of more lenient measures.

This is perhaps why the greatest challenge to the dominant medico-legal models has not been enabled through civil libertarian arguments, but instead via the middle ground provided by the imperatives of public health. The emergence of HIV/AIDS in the 1980s, and its rapid spread amongst gay men, sex workers and injecting drug users, forced Western Governments to reassess the efficacy of their existing responses to injecting drug use. Although responses to the virus were initially dominated by moralising rhetoric surrounding the behaviours of these marginalised groups, several countries, including Australia, the UK and Canada, quickly shifted to more liberal and tolerant public health models of disease prevention (Brown 2000: 1274-6; Bunton 2001: 223, 226; O’Malley 2004: 156). It was in this context that ‘harm minimisation’ approaches to drug policy were born.

**Harm Minimisation**

Rather than focusing on preventing or stopping drug use itself, harm minimisation approaches concentrate on the prevention of harms associated with drug use. By presenting rational, empirical evidence of the health harms, such as HIV, that continue to be produced despite – and in many cases because of – dominant medico-legal policy frameworks, harm minimisation advocates have been able to gain wide-ranging political and social support for more ‘pragmatic’ responses to drug use. The most
significant of these has been the introduction of needle and syringe programs (NSPs), which provide sterile injecting equipment and health advice to injecting drug users. These programs have been crucial to preventing the spread of HIV and other blood-borne viruses such as hepatitis B and C. In countries where such programs were established early, such as Australia, the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland, HIV infection rates have remained relatively low amongst injectors and the community as a whole (see for example: Strathdee and Vlahov 2001). By contrast, in many other countries – including the USA – where NSPs were established late, inconsistently or not at all, HIV infection rates are now extremely high (2001).

As well as providing the physical resources necessary for reducing harm, harm minimisation approaches also seek to inform and educate those who use drugs about safer use practices. The most significant harm minimisation education initiative has been the development of peer-education programs, in which past and present drug users teach others who use drugs how to do so more safely. Such programs have been extremely successful at reducing harm, due not only to the accuracy and up-to-date nature of the information, but also to the ability of peers to gain legitimacy amongst other users. Information on safer use is also provided via educative brochures and advertisements, and by health professionals and social workers at NSPs and other harm minimisation services. Rather than treating those who use drugs as criminal drug ‘abusers’ or helpless ‘addicts’, such educational campaigns seek to ‘enlist’ them by calling upon those who use drugs to take responsibility for managing their risk-taking and looking after their own health (O’Malley 2004: 158). Part of the success of these strategies is a result of the care they take not to alienate those who use drugs by judging their drug use, or by pressuring them to stop using.

With their basis in western empirical sciences – including epidemiology, risk probabilities and public health – harm minimisation approaches have been able to benefit from the widespread cross-political support for these scientific forms of knowledge. This is one of the reasons harm minimisation approaches have been so successful at gaining the endorsement of diverse groups of people with otherwise very

---

11 Interestingly, this term has war-like ‘conscription’ connotations which suggest that for harm minimisation, the new drug war is perhaps a war on harm fought by those who use drugs.
different political, social, economic and moral allegiances. This cross-political support has enabled the implementation of a wide range of often-controversial harm minimisation initiatives. In various places and at various times, these initiatives have included: heroin prescription programs, which provide heroin on medical prescription to long-term or dependant users; supervised injecting facilities (SIFs), which offer clean and medically supervised places to inject drugs; syringe vending machines, which provide anonymous access to clean injecting equipment at all hours; syringe disposal bins, which provide for secure needle and syringe disposal; pill-testing machines, which reduce the chances of poisoning and overdose by providing information on drug purity and contents; and methadone maintenance programs, which provide synthetic opiates on medical prescription to replace or reduce heroin use.

The broad social and health benefits of such initiatives are by now well documented (Hunt 2003; Treloar and Fraser 2007). However, harm minimisation approaches still face strong moral and political opposition. In Australia, where ‘harm minimisation’ has been the official guiding principal of the national drug policy since 1989, medico-legal approaches nonetheless continue to take precedence in practice. Substantially more money has always been spent, for example, on law enforcement and on abstinence-oriented prevention education and treatment, than on harm minimisation initiatives (Miller 2001: 169). Many initiatives – including heroin prescription programs, pill testing machines, and prison-based NSPs – are yet to be established, and as yet only one SIF, which opened in Sydney in 2001, has been approved for operation.

Over the 12 years from 1995 to 2007, a conservative federal government further watered down the national policy of ‘harm minimisation’ by formally incorporating within it not only ‘harm reduction’ (that which was previously known as harm minimisation) but also ‘supply reduction’ (law enforcement) and ‘demand reduction’ (abstinence-oriented prevention education and drug treatment). This linguistic manoeuvering enabled a range of abstinence-oriented initiatives to be deployed under the banner of ‘harm minimisation’ (Miller 2001: 169). Examples include shock-tactic advertising campaigns, such as the one mentioned in the introduction, which are
framed as harm minimisation, despite their capacity to stigmatise drug users and increase community fear, while doing little to educate existing or potential drug users on safer practices. Examples also include ‘zero tolerance’ and ‘saturation’\(^\text{12}\) policing operations, which have been carried out as harm minimisation, despite the negative impacts they tend to have on the health and welfare of drug users and, collaterally, the broader community. Such operations have been shown, for example: to deter injectors from accessing needle and syringe programs and other health services; to deter them from carrying their own injecting equipment; to encourage less safe methods of drug storage and use; to encourage unsafe disposal of injecting equipment; and to displace drug injectors to new areas, thereby dislocating them from their usual health and social support networks (see for example: Aitken et al 2002; Fitzgerald et al 1999; Maher and Dixon 1999; Small et al 2006; and Wood et al 2004).

The watering-down of harm minimisation models through the Federal policy framework has also had the effect of weakening the capacity of harm minimisation advocates to effectively counter the kinds of medico-legal interventions mentioned above. The incorporation of supply and demand reduction within harm minimisation, for example, has made it more difficult for advocates to distinguish, and get public and political support for, more traditional harm minimisation approaches and initiatives. As a result, many in the field have begun to critically reassess harm minimisation models and their ability to continue providing useful frameworks for advocacy, policy and practice. Some have argued that one of the key reasons harm minimisation models have been so susceptible to sabotage and co-option by advocates of prohibition and medico-addiction models is their failure to adequately define what is meant by harm (see for example: Hathaway 2002: 397). Others have suggested that it is instead a result of their failure to articulate a strong moral foundation (see for example: Hathaway 2001; Irwin and Fry 2007) or human rights agenda (see for example: Hunt 2004; Hathaway 2002; van Ree 1999).

However the extent to which such refinements would improve the prospects of harm minimisation models is questionable. As noted earlier, the success of harm

\(^{12}\) Saturation policing here refers to the deployment of large numbers of police – usually a mix of uniformed and plain-clothed police – in a particular area to target a particular activity (in this case drug dealing and using) over an intensive period of time (such as a week or a month).
minimisation approaches is in large part due to their ability to bring together a diverse range of proponents, including prohibitionists and health professionals, as well as those seeking drug decriminalisation or legalisation (Hunt 2004: 236). Any attempts to reach some sort of consensus on the ‘harms’ they seek to minimise, the type of ‘rights’ they seek to foster, or the ‘moral agenda’ they seek to establish, will not only be extremely difficult, but will likely challenge these strategic alliances, and leave harm minimisation approaches even more vulnerable to political attack. The success of harm minimisation models is also a result of their ability to remain flexible and adaptive: responsive to particular local issues and practical solutions (Keane 2003: 229). By not being too narrowly or rigidly defined, harm minimisation frameworks have been able to strategically slip between the political gaps and impasses created by medico-addiction, zero-tolerance and civil libertarian pro-legalisation lobbyists. By remaining a-moral (as opposed to either moral or anti-moral), and focusing on pragmatic, non-judgmental, health-focused and evidence-based interventions, harm minimisation approaches have also been able to neutralise what is otherwise a highly-charged moral landscape (227). Rather than countering moralism head on, as many civil libertarian and legalisation proponents do, harm minimisation models succeed by shifting the terms of the debate so that moral arguments lose their solid footing (229). If they were to ground themselves in a specific moral framework, and seek to ‘out-moral’ the conservatives, harm minimisation models would most likely lose out (229). Similarly, if they were to have their scope and agenda defined too narrowly, harm minimisation models would be more difficult to successfully manoeuver and implement within the gaps of these highly moralised and ever-shifting policy spaces.

The limitations of harm minimisation frameworks are, I suggest, not a result of poorly defined terms, nor an absence of moral or human rights frameworks, but are instead linked to their continuing reliance on a problematic Western, Enlightenment model of subjectivity. I will now examine some of the ways in which this model of subjectivity, which also underpins medico-addiction and crimino-legal responses to drug use, has been critiqued, and explore the implications of these theoretical insights for models and practices of harm minimisation.
Rethinking Subjectivity

Since the rise of the ‘Enlightened’ positivist sciences around the early 1900s, when a focus on ‘truth’ ‘rationality and ‘reason’ began to replace an interest in aesthetics, superstition and emotion, Western understandings of human behaviour have been based upon a limited model of subjectivity. In this model the ideal human subject is assumed to be rational, autonomous, and striving toward objective ‘truth’ (Keane 2003: 230). These characteristics are made possible by three inter-connected ontological assumptions, namely: 1) that the mind can be separated from, and made transcendent over, the body; 2) that the human subject is separate to that which surrounds it; and 3) that there exists a single, external, objectively measurable reality or ‘truth’.

The impossibility – and, moreover, undesirability – of this model of subjectivity was perhaps first articulated by postmodern feminist theorists, who demonstrated the extent to which it is based upon the narrow experiences, expectations and interests of the archetypal white, western, upper-class, educated, heterosexual ‘Man’ (see for example: Bordo 1990; Butler 1990; Flax 1987; Fraser 1989; Grosz 1994a; Probyn 1993; Young 1990). By devaluing the role of embodied experience, ignoring the material influence of factors such as gender, race, class and sexuality, and precluding the existence of multiple ‘truths’, rationalities and subjectivities, the Enlightenment model operates to deny legitimate subjectivity, power and ‘voice’ to those who do not correspond with its narrow ambit. To the extent that women, for example, do not conform to its impossible ideals of objective detachment, reason and free will, they are implicitly positioned as inferior, dangerous or mad (Lupton 1995: 8).

This process of exclusion is not incidental to the operation of Enlightenment subjectivity, but crucial to its very possibility. The illusions of rationality, autonomy and truth are themselves produced and maintained through the production and designation of their binary opposites: the irrational, the dependant, the false or artificial. Enlightenment models of subjectivity thus rely on a system of mutually-perpetuating, hierarchical binaries in order to survive (Butler 1990). These include not only the binaries of rational/irrational, autonomous/dependant and true/false, but also
those of mind/body, inside/outside, self/other and subject/‘abject’-other. Critiques of these binaries, and rejection of the Enlightenment models of subjectivity and truth they support, now form the basis of most postmodern, poststructural and postcolonial theories and influence disciplines as diverse as philosophy, cultural studies, literature. Theorists have shown how such binaries tend to position all difference as negative, thereby creating and strengthening divisions between people, and between individuals and the world around them (see for example: Butler 1990). In failing to account for the complexities of this experience – simplifying all its shades of grey into categories of black and white – such binaries have also been shown to limit our capacity to perceive and account for the nuances of human behaviour and interaction. Reliance on, and reproduction of, Enlightenment binary models of subjectivity therefore has implications for both our capacity to understand the world, as well as for an ethics of social relations.

It is important to note then, that zero-tolerance and medico-addiction drug policy frameworks both almost exclusively rely upon on and reproduce this problematic Enlightenment model of subjectivity. In doing so, however, each differs in terms of the extent to which the drug user is understood to conform to the ideal of rationality, autonomy and ‘truth’. In crimino-legal models, for example, all people – including drug users – are assumed to be able to make rational choices based on simple cost-benefit analyses. Those who break the law – including those who choose to use or trade in illicit drugs – are therefore to be held fully and directly accountable. By contrast, in medico-addiction models drug users are seen as having lost their ability for rational thought, autonomy and agency: having instead become ruled by the drug and their bodily desires (Keane 2002). Drug use here is seen as the manifestation of an illness – a ‘disease of the will’ (Valverde 1998) – and the solution is to return the individual to the ideal state of rationality through psychological and/or pharmaceutical treatment. Despite their differences, both of these approaches maintain the existence of a binary opposition between ideal ‘rational’ subjectivity and the abject irrational ‘other’. This helps to explain how medical and law-enforcement models have been able to so easily co-exist, with treatment now an important part of most Western criminal justice ‘correctional’ systems. In terms of drugs policy, it also helps to
explain how ‘supply reduction’ approaches have so easily joined forces with ‘demand reduction’ approaches in contemporary policy and practice.\(^\text{13}\)

Despite offering some important improvements on these frameworks, harm minimisation approaches are ultimately still rooted in the same Enlightenment model of subjectivity (Keane 2003: 230; Fitzgerald 1999: 5-6; Moore and Fraser 2006: 3036). Like crimino-legal models, harm minimisation tends to maintain that the drug-using subject is capable of autonomy and rational thought, and hence refuses to pathologise them or render them passive (O’Malley 2004: 157). Rather than responding to this rationality by taking a prohibitive criminal justice approach, however, harm minimisation seeks to ‘enlist’ it, calling upon those who use drugs to take responsibility for their own health (Miller 2001: 167-77; O’Malley 2004: 158).

And like medico-addiction models, harm minimisation recognises that people are not always able to be fully autonomous. Rather than locate the factors affecting autonomy within the body, however, harm minimisation tends to look to external factors – such as a lack of appropriate equipment or knowledge about safe practices – when evaluating risk negotiation capacities (Duff 2003: 287). There is a tendency, therefore, for harm minimisation strategies – particularly those which involve education campaigns – to rely on an assumption that once drug users are provided with the right equipment, or advised of the risks, they will then make more rational, ‘healthy’ behavioural choices (see for example: Duff 2003: 290). This assumption – that knowledge (or equipment) will lead seamlessly to a change in attitude and then in behaviour – is known as the Knowledge-Attitude-Behaviour (or KAB) model of human action. It forms the basis of most health promotion initiatives, and has been widely critiqued (Lupton 1995: 56).

Such models have been shown, for example, to fail to account for the ways in which social relations (see for example: Boyd 1999; Duff 2003: 290; Rhodes 1997, 208; Rhodes and Quirk 1998: 167-8), culture (Duff 2003: 286) and spatial contexts (Dovey et al 2001: 319-31; Duff 2007: 503-19; Maher and Dixon 1999: 501-6) impact upon risk production and mediation. They have been shown to ignore sex and gender

\(^{13}\) A good Australian example here is criminal justice diversion programs, in which drug users charged with a drug offence are offered treatment as an alternative to punishment.
differences in risk experiences, perceptions and responses (see for example: Connors 1992; Marsh and Loxley 1994). As such, interventions often tend to be based on research conducted with straight men, and therefore are limited in their capacity to effectively address or assist the many other people who also use drugs (Denton 2001). And by ignoring spatial context, many harm minimisation initiatives fail to account for physical features – such as poor lighting, unhygienic conditions, access to clean water, and lack of suitable preparation areas – which may also impact upon risk reduction.

By relying on Enlightenment models of subjectivity, harm minimisation approaches also have a tendency to ignore the role of bodily pleasure and desire when addressing drug-using behaviours (Coveney and Bunton 2003; Duff 2008: 384-92; Hathaway 2002: 399; Moore 2008: 353-8; Race 2008: 417; Stimson 2007: 68; Valentine and Fraser 2008: 410-6). By failing to acknowledge that drug use is often a source of great pleasure, harm minimisation initiatives risk not only their credibility and legitimacy, but also their ability to account for the motivations that mediate drug-related behaviours. Many initiatives seem to assume, for example, that people are – or should be – naturally risk averse (Duff 2003: 290). This assumption overlooks the role of the body, the unconscious and desire in the mediation of drug-related behaviours, and fails to account for the fact that risk-taking itself can also be a source of pleasure or joy (Lupton 1995: 87). And, as Lupton notes, it ignores that fact that risky activities often derive much of their pleasure through the very fact that they are deemed to be risky, deviant or perverse (136). The positioning of certain activities as ‘high-risk’ must therefore necessarily be understood as contributing – at least in some way – to their ‘dark’ or sublime appeal; ‘serving to intensify their enjoyment by rendering them sins’ (155).

Harm minimisation approaches not only depend upon the Enlightenment model of subjectivity, but also work to reinforce and reproduce it, encouraging conformity to its ideals. Although they dismantle many of the strict binaries which govern medico-legal models – abandoning, for example, rigid ‘Just say no!’ approaches in favour of more amorphous continuums of harms and methods of negotiating harm (O’Malley 2004: 160-161) – harm minimisation models still often reproduce and reinforce binary
distinctions between the self and others and between inside and outside the body (Treloar and Fraser 2004: 381). Messages aimed to prevent blood-borne virus spread, for example, tend to encourage the body to be treated as a bounded fortress, which needs to be protected from contact with others at all times (381). This has implications for the kinds of social relations that are encouraged: for how those who use drugs are expected to interact with others, perceive others and perceive themselves. Although the maintenance of such boundaries can be very useful – as when contaminated blood is prevented from entering another’s blood stream – it can also be detrimental – as when it deters those using drugs from sharing other things, such as information and clean equipment, or providing support in the case of an overdose.

Reliance on binary models – such as those between self and other, health and illness, contaminated and clean – also tends to create a sense of ‘all-or-nothing’ when it comes to blood-borne virus infection. In trying to convince drug injectors of the seriousness of hepatitis C, for example, public health literature often unwittingly creates an extreme, binary sense of health and illness: a sense that ‘blood is either clean or dirty, pure or defiled, and once hepatitis C has been acquired, cleanliness and purity is the preserve of others only’ (Fraser and Treloar 2006: 103). This can result in hepatitis C infection being understood ‘in terms of an absolute shift from healthy to sick, clean to contaminated, good to bad’ (99), which has important implications for public health. If, for example, someone considers their blood to be completely contaminated, they may worry less about avoiding future bacterial or viral infections, including possible infection with other strains of hepatitis C, or with HIV (99). It also has implications for social relations: for the ways in which other people might perceive and treat those who have – or are thought to have – hepatitis C, and for the ways in which those with hepatitis C might engage with others.

In exploring the ways in which harm minimisation produces and reproduces particular forms of risk and subjectivity, theorists have increasingly drawn on the work of Foucault and his concepts of power, discourse, governmentality and pleasure (see for example: Duff 2004; Miller 2001; Race 2008). It is worth turning briefly, therefore, to the work of Foucault and the ways in which it has been used to understand the implications of harm minimisation and public health promotion more broadly.
For Foucault (1972, 1977, 1986), power is not something which is imposed from above or outside, nor is it something which can be possessed by an individual. Power instead operates at the micro-level of everyday interactions and practices. It operates through language and knowledge and through the authority which comes to be vested in particular sets of languages, knowledges, disciplines and practices. These ‘discourses’ or forms of ‘governmentality’, work not so much to ‘oppress’ individuals, but to classify them and through this, to produce the very frameworks of possibility for their being. By gathering information regarding large-scale population trends and bio-rhythms, and using this information to disseminate particular normative discursive ‘truths’ (such as truths about health and risk), the state (along with other disciplinary bodies such as western medicine, science, the law) works discursively to produce normative subjects who know themselves, and come to be in the world, in particular normative ways.

In relation to harm minimisation, Western bio-medical discourses deserve particular attention. Their ability to increasingly generate and classify forms of bodily deviance and normality, and ‘patrol them’ (Ettorre 1998: 548) through the wider social field (schools, workplaces, government health advertising, interpersonal social regulation), is of growing concern. By producing particular normative forms of subjectivity, and creating subjects who ‘choose’ to behave in particular normative ways, bio-medical health discourses work to govern behaviour not through subjugation but through ‘freedom’ (Keane 2002: 7-8).

As a form of health governance, harm minimisation therefore can be seen to produce and reproduce particular norms regarding appropriate behaviour, comportment and attitude (Brown 2000: 1277-8; Lupton 1995: 2, 46; Miller 2001: 177). Rather than forcing behavioural change, or punishing those who fail to mend their ways, harm minimisation works by producing subjects who are ‘free’ to ‘choose’ to take responsibility for their own actions and their own health and wellbeing. In doing so, these processes of governmentality tend to shift responsibility for behaviour and
health away from the State and onto the ‘individual’, and thus obscure the broader socio-structural, economic and environmental factors which impact upon health and risk (Moore and Fraser 2006: 3035). They also tend to produce a net-widening effect: multiplying the ways in which people’s lives are monitored, the forms of intervention that are enacted, and the sites at which surveillance and information gathering occurs (Fischer et al 2004: 358). Yet because this surveillance takes place via ‘benevolent’, liberal and even ‘progressive’ forms of assistance and support (Fischer et al 2004: 363), and because and the disciplining of bodies occurs at the almost-imperceptible level of subjectivity production, levels of accountability are low.

To the extent that information about risks and harm is presented as objective science, for example, the normative and moral judgments that inform this information are obscured (O’Malley 2004: 163). As Lupton has shown, even apparently benign terms such as ‘empowerment’ and ‘choice’ are invested with moral expectations regarding what it is that people are expected to be empowered to do or to choose (1995: 59). Within ‘notions of “empowerment” and collective action, there is often still an emphasis on encouraging individuals to behave in certain ways deemed appropriate by public health professionals’ (59). Empowerment in a health promotion or harm reduction context does not, in other words, involve enabling people to question, resist and challenge contemporary discourses and power-relations, but instead involves enabling people to do ‘exactly’ what is deemed ‘correct’ (58-60).

A great deal of sex-education aimed at preventing the spread of HIV, for example, is informed by moral and religious views about sex, marriage, abstinence and decency (Lupton 1995: 116). Teaching school students about the importance of condoms and the differences between male and female genitalia, for example – especially where the focus in on a penis and vagina (with no mention of a clitoris or female sexual desire more generally) – is a practice which is tied to moral norms regarding gendered desire, heterosexual sex and reproduction as much as it is to risk reduction (see: Elliot 2003; Hillier and Mitchell 2008). Advising young people to avoid HIV by remaining abstinent until marriage, also has more to do with getting people to conform to particular conservative social norms than it does with preventing them from contracting the virus (Hillier and Mitchell 2008; Lupton 1995: 116). Similarly,
advising injecting drug users to avoid HIV by ceasing drug use, or ceasing injecting, are strategies as much tied to moral, social and legal norms regarding acceptable and desirable behaviour as they are to preventing the spread of blood-borne viruses (Brown 2000: 1278).

To the extent that harm minimisation discourses focus on the reduction and management of risk and harm, they tend to produce forms of subjectivity that are tied to these terms. By implicitly framing all drug use as harmful or problematic, despite the fact that occasional or ‘recreational’ use of drugs is far more common than problematic, long term use or dependency (Duff 2003: 295), harm minimisation discourses also tend to force together an otherwise diverse range of people according to the one thing they have in common – their drug use or ‘risk’ behavior (Brown 2000: 1274). In order to ‘recognise’ themselves as recipients of harm minimisation discourses access and utilise harm minimisation services, these people must and articulate themselves, and their drug use, as risky, harmful or problematic (Duff 2003: 285-6).

Although less explicit than the kinds of self-articulation enforced within Alcoholics Anonymous style self-help groups, these subtle forms of subjectification can have a profound impact on individual health and well-being. In one study, for example, women deemed to be at ‘high risk’ of breast cancer experienced it as though they were in a ‘liminal state between health and illness’ (study cited in Lupton 1995: 85). Such risk ‘rationalities’ (Duff 2003: 288) also carry with them a broader, more ambiguous sense of ‘endangerment’, through which those who are deemed ‘risky’ tend to be positioned not only as a risk to themselves, but also to others: that is, as both ‘vulnerable’ and a ‘threat’ (Brown 2000: 1276). This is particularly so for those who use drugs, and whose ‘risk’ vulnerability so often tends to also be associated with their risk to others through infectivity, lack of control, mental illness, violence and death. Harm minimisation discourses therefore impact upon the ways in which those who use drugs can and do interact with others. They contribute, as Brown suggests, to ‘boundary making practices’ (1275); producing and reproducing ‘stigmatising boundaries between so-called “at risk” and “normal” populations’ (1274; see also Lupton 1995: 75, 158).
This is not to say that harm minimisation discourses and practices do not also help to enable positive sites for the articulation of identity and agency (Keane 2003: 231; Moore and Fraser 2006: 3035), but rather it is to problematise the assumption that they do so exclusively. Understanding practices of harm minimisation as forms of disciplinarity, therefore, does not mean seeing them as inherently oppressive (Keane 2003: 232), but instead means becoming attuned to the kinds of subjectivities they produce. In doing so, it is also important to avoid reading this production of subjectivity as deterministic. People both incorporate and resist the normalising discourses and ‘labels’ which govern them (Butler 1993).

The work of Judith Butler (1990, 1993) has been particularly useful in exploring the ways in which these processes of incorporation and resistance manifest at the level of everyday bodily practices. For Butler, the production of subjectivity and identity takes place through everyday embodied performances of the self. These performances repeat and reiterate existing, recognisable discourses (language/practices/norms) but also involve an element of creativity: through which new forms of subjectivity and identity become possible. Agency here is not open ended, but is shaped and limited by the discursive and material possibilities available. People cannot construct any identity or subjectivity they please, whenever they please. Not all creative articulations of the self are successful. Those who use drugs, for example, cannot completely escape from the discourses of immorality, risk, disease, addiction and criminality which surround them. These discourses provide the contexts within which drug user subjectivities become possible. They also provide the terms which come to be incorporated into the narratives and everyday practices of the drug-using self (see for example: Hassin 1994; Malins 2000; Malins et al 2006). These incorporations can be helpful, in that they enable those using drugs to gain a recognisable or ‘legitimate’ subjectivity, and through this, access to services and a political ‘voice’. Yet the types of socio-spatial ‘access’ and political ‘voice’ that are possible within the terms of these discourses are extremely limited. Simply constructing oneself in terms which offer a binary opposition to the dominant framing – for example, as ‘responsible’ rather than ‘irresponsible, as ‘healthy’ rather than ‘unhealthy’ – does nothing to challenge the dominant framework. In order to actually begin to dismantle the
dominant binaries, resistance must constitute an escape from the terms of these discourses altogether.

While Foucault’s conception of power and Butler’s concept of performativity have both proven extremely valuable to the task of exploring the role of discourse in the normative production, performative re-production and oppositional resistance to drug user subjectivity, they are perhaps less helpful when it comes to examining the ways in which drug using bodies might connect with the world around them in ways not necessarily constituted by discourse and governance. That is, when rethinking bodies as not simply shaped by discourse, and opposition to it, but as producing embodied affects in other ways altogether.

Culture, Corporeality and Desire

Capitalist consumption is today one of the key sites through which people are able to experiment with and transform their identity (Cronin 2002: 317; Fitzgerald 2002a: 218-9, 2005: 569; Manning 2007: 24). It is also, somewhat paradoxically, one of the key sites through which many people are being increasingly excluded from legitimate forms of social identity and from ever-more commercialised urban spaces (Fischer et al 2004; Mitchell 2003; Sibley 1995). It is crucial then that our responses to drug use take into account the ways in which capitalism and commodity cultures intersect and intertwine with cultures and practices of drug use. Rather than simply treat drugs as risky, psychoactive substances, and drug users as individual agents and subjects of risk, it is important that we begin to see these phenomenon as embedded within a broader field of cultural signifiers, commodities and practices of consumption (Cronin 2002: 317; Fitzgerald 2002a: 202-3; Lupton 1994: 113). We need, for example, to begin to think all processes of consumption – whether it be the consumption of drugs, advertising, film, music, painting, television, fashion or other commodities – as operating in relation to similar desires and pleasures. In doing so, we also need to go beyond simply reading popular culture as having the potential to cause or to encourage drug use, or simply reading drugs as ‘commodities’ or commodities as ‘drugs’ (Cronin 2002: 323-4). Likewise, it is important that we move beyond simply understanding illicit drug use as a form of political and cultural resistance to
mainstream or ‘straight’ culture or to dominant discourses of ‘ideal’ subjectivity (Manning 2007: 19). Desire for drugs can, for example, also be understood as part of a broader process of desiring-production within capitalism – in which desire is produced not simply for commodities, but for endless movements of self-transformation (Cronin 2002: 317, 327; Fitzgerald 2002a: 218-9).

Within contemporary capitalism, possibilities for self-transformation are in many ways increasingly opened up, however these possibilities are almost always tied to one’s capacity and willingness to consume. As Manning notes:

    Late modernity, or “disorganised capitalism” encourages a greater degree of reflexivity in terms of self and more opportunities for individuals to re-invent their identities… But these opportunities… become powerfully inscribed with discourses of consumption. Individuals enjoy more “cultural space” but there are powerful forces in play that encourage them to reinvent themselves primarily through consumption and the associated concepts of lifestyle and fashion (2007: 24).

Within contemporary capitalism, products are no longer marketed in relation to their use-value, but in relation to intangible transformational ideals. Intangible notions of ‘lifestyle’, ‘prestige’, ‘sexuality’, ‘youth’, and ‘disaffection’ are all used to provide otherwise fairly mundane products with abstract value (Jhally 1990; Rose 2005; Williams 1993). In this way anything and everything (women’s bodies, drug use, sex, and so on) can – and does – become commodified; not because these things are necessarily sold, but because the marketing and consumption takes place in relation to them. Contemporary advertising increasingly makes use of the instability of signs: layering multiple meanings, significations and cultural referents upon commodities (Jhally 1990; Rose 2005). Theorists have shown how contemporary consumers are increasingly aware of the complex multiplicity of meanings associated with contemporary advertisements, and have learnt to play an active role in looking for, reading, negotiating and enjoying the complex layering of cultural references they provide (Rose 2005). Yet health promotional education campaigns, including those promoting harm minimisation, have tended to ignore these insights, treating their audiences as naïve, dependant and passive recipients of its health messages (Lupton 1994: 115). As several writers have noted, harm minimisation campaigns would be
more successful if they moved away from simply advising people what to do and not do, and instead begin treating drug users as complex intelligent consumers (115).

Harm minimisation models have also not paid adequate attention to the shifting nature of urban space within contemporary capitalism. Interventions tend to treat urban space as a neutral container, rather than a complex social, political and economic medium. Within contemporary capitalism, public urban spaces are being increasingly commodified and privatised, infested with advertising and marketing, and increasingly controlled by private, profit-oriented interests (Mitchell 2003: 138-42). Drug users – along with others who either do not sufficiently partake in, or who are thought to detract from, mainstream capitalist forms of consumption (sex workers, the homeless, skateboarders, graffitists, young people in general, political protesters and activists, and so on) – are being increasingly shifted out of urban space (Fischer et al 2004: 357). Not enough attention has been paid to the implications of these spatial shifts on drug use and drug-related harm, nor on the ways in which harm minimisation interventions might themselves exacerbate these trends. The introduction of safe injecting facilities, for example, might unwittingly be helping to increase the commercialisation and commodification of urban space by cleansing the city of ‘disorderly’, ‘chaotic’ drug users (357).

Consideration of these issues requires a more nuanced understanding of contemporary cultures of consumption and commodification, and the ways in which they interact with urban space. Rather than view this interaction simply in terms of the production of an illusory or imaginary ‘reality’, many post-modern and poststructural theorists – particularly feminist theorists – have drawn attention to the importance of the specificity and corporeality of the body. Our relationship to the world is mediated not simply by discourse, nor by an endless play of signs and significations, but by embodied connections, sensations and affects. While harm minimisation approaches do concern themselves with the corporeal body – as a site of potential infection, illness and death – they do not yet pay adequate attention to the aspects of corporeality involving embodied sensations (Fitzgerald et al 1999: 499). The moment of injecting drugs, for example, can no more be reduced to a site of social resistance or subjectivity-production, than it can be reduced to a series of objective, practical
steps toward achieving a state of drug-induced pleasure. It is a moment that involves a range of intense, and often contradictory, sensations and emotions, including pleasure, desire, pain, anxiety, nausea and disgust (499). Likewise, the moment of encounter with signs and images of drug use tends to involve more than simply fear or disgust, but a range of often contradictory embodied sensations.

These sensations are shaped by an interaction of social and cultural expectations, spatial context and non-conscious bodily reflexes. As Douglas so effectively demonstrates, embodied responses of disgust are never tied simply to an object itself, but to the context or positioning of that object, relative to our expectations (1966). Soil, for example, is perfectly acceptable when in the garden, but tends to become unsettling when it is found – as ‘dirt’ – on our clothes or in our food (36-7). Syringes and opiates are likewise not very concerning when found, for example, in a hospital, but are troubling when found in a city laneway or alcove (Manning 2007: 12). Just as things which are out-of-place can produce anxiety, so too can things which transgress or disturb expected boundaries (Kristeva 1982: 2-4). The skin that can appear on top of heated milk, for example, can be understood to be disturbing partly because it breaks down the distinctions that we expect between liquid and solid, milk and air, edible and inedible (2-4). Similarly, fluids which seep out of the body – blood, sweat, urine, faeces – can be understood, at least in part, to disturb through their ability to confound neat distinctions between inside and out, self and other. Our responses to such things are bound up with social and cultural expectations, but yet they are responses which occur at the level of the sensing body – as visceral, reflex, gut responses.

Harm minimisation health promotional campaigns have often explicitly manipulated these visceral, gut responses. Attempts to convince people to improve their diet, avoid taking drugs, or exercise more often use extreme images of bodies which play on ideas of matter out of place and boundary transgression. As Lupton notes, ‘the grotesque body is commonly vividly represented, often visually as a horror of flesh-out-of-control’ (1995: 120). These emotional appeals are generally directed toward women, and to inciting ‘anxiety around the attractiveness and youthfulness of their bodies’ (120). The image of the woman picking at sores on her skin, with which I
began this thesis, is a particularly troubling example, for it brings with it not only a fear of the unfamiliar, but a sense of disgust regarding women’s bodies and the potential for them to ooze and leak. It draws on gendered expectations and fears surrounding the body, and – at the same time – reproduces and reinforces those fears.

Yet images and encounters such as these do not simply induce fear and disgust; they also produce a strange, sublime pleasure: a compulsion or desire to both look and turn away (Kristeva 1982). Thinking through the relationships between aesthetics, ethics and the drug-using body therefore requires that we also think more carefully about pleasure and desire. Psychoanalytic theories have provided us with ways of thinking through pleasure and desire in terms that go beyond – or rather beneath – the cognitive and rational. By drawing attention to the unconscious and subliminal ways in which bodies produce and invest desire, and the ways in which these desires manifest in visceral, embodied relations, psychoanalytic theories have transformed the ways we are able to think and talk about the body.14 They offer the potential to bring pleasure, desire and irrationality back into thinking and discussions around drug use and drug policy.

However, the tendency of psychoanalytic theories to conceptualise expressions of desire and pleasure in ‘normalising’ (Race 2008) and pathologising terms – as indicative, for example, of some sort of dysfunction or personal lack (Duff 2008: 388; Valentine and Fraser 2008: 412) – mean that their utility in relation to an ethico-aesthetics of drug use is extremely limited. While psychoanalysis has enabled theorists to usefully conceptualise the ways in which early childhood trauma might contribute to problematic relationships, including relationships to drug use (Valentine and Fraser 2008: 411), too often drug use and its pleasures come to be read only in terms of such trauma. As Valentine and Fraser note: ‘associating problematic drug use with trauma and a fractured self can easily shift to a reinscription of users as deficient; where problematic drug use represents proof of trauma and nothing else’ (2008: 411).

14 For example, psychoanalytic terms and concepts – such as the ‘phallus’, ‘Freudian slips’, the ‘Oedipus complex’, and ‘the unconscious’ – regularly appear in all sorts of everyday conversations and cultural references.
This tendency to focus on individual pathology and personal history also means that broader social, economic and structural factors associated with drug use tend to be ignored (411). And by focusing overwhelmingly on the ‘causes’ of drug use rather than its effects (411) psychoanalysis necessitates that abstinence, rather than harm reduction, is implicitly the aim of an inquiry or intervention. Those using drugs thus tend to be seen as in need of some form of treatment – whether psycho-therapeutic or medicinal – in order to ‘correct’ their drug use. As Race notes, ‘the insertion of pleasure and desire into normalising regimes at the hands of therapeutic discourses such as psychoanalysis is seen as centrally problematic’ (2008: 419). Although psychoanalytic approaches read the underlying ‘cause’ of drug use very differently to medico-pharmaceutical models (which focus on genetic, chemical and biological factors), and propose slightly different remedies (psychotherapy in addition to pharmaceutical intervention), the two nonetheless sit very comfortably alongside one another in pathologising those who use drugs.

As a framework for thinking through the non-rational, unconscious relationships between aesthetics, ethics and the drug-using body therefore, psychoanalysis is extremely limited. It is important then that we begin to find other ways to map desire and pleasure and their relationships to the body, aesthetics and ethics. In this thesis I propose that Deleuze and Guattari’s ethico-aesthetic model offers a productive way forward. I will now map out this framework and explore its implications not only ontologically, but also methodologically in terms of the production of this thesis.

**Ethico-Aesthetics: As Ontology and Methodology**

Although it was Felix Guattari who first explicitly referred to the idea of an ‘ethico-aesthetic paradigm’ (1995), the link between ethics and aesthetics is one which, I believe, runs implicitly throughout Deleuze and Guattari’s collective works. For both thinkers, the practice of ethics cannot be separated from aesthetics and embodied sensation, and from what Deleuze, following Foucault, also refers to as ‘ways of existing’ or ‘styles of life’ (1995: 100).
Drawing primarily on the work of Spinoza and Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari develop a concept of ethics which is very different to that of morality. Unlike moral reasoning, ethics here does not involve the objective reflection of a rational mind, but instead concerns the actions and reactions of a sensing, moving body. Instead of referring back to an overarching system of moral rules or values, ethics takes place in and through the body via lived, embodied sensation. In this sense it is immanent to life, rather than transcendent over it. In contrast to morality, ethics does not involve judgment, blame or guilt, but active practices of embodied ‘evaluation’. It does not, in other words, concern itself with internal states, intentions and motives, but with movements, habits, actions, outcomes, and effects. It is for this reason that Deleuze and Guattari sometimes refer to it, following Spinoza, as a kind of ‘ethology’ (1987: 336). Where morality is concerned with static identities and essences (with what a body is) this ethological ethics is concerned with movements and affects, that is, with what a body can do. As an ethology, it is also not human-centric; it does not simply concern itself with the actions of human bodies but with the relations, movements and potentialities of all bodies (Gatens 2000: 62-3). Rather that focusing on negation – and with what bodies should not be doing – ethico-aesthetics is interested in practices which increase and open up the range of things which bodies can do. It involves, in other words, affirming the kinds of sensations, relations and ways of being in the world which enhance the possibilities for life.

Practices of aesthetics are, for Deleuze and Guattari, central to these practices of ethics. Aesthetics here does not refer to the study of that which is attractive, beautiful or pleasing. Nor does it refer to some kind of ‘objective’, disembodied critique or judgment of art. Aesthetics instead concerns the production of embodied sensations. Aesthetics does not rely on a knowing ‘subject’ but involves the production of a-subjective affects which have the capacity to produce embodied sensations. These embodied sensations are not simply those involving vision – the sense which is prioritised above all others in Western thought and practice (Falk 1997; Jay 1993) – but here include all the senses: sight, sound, taste, texture and smell. It also concerns variations in intensity – heat, density, speed, colour, tone, and so on – as much as it

15 Ethology generally refers to the study of animal behaviours, movements and relations. Deleuze defines it as: ‘the study of the relations of speed and slowness, of capacities for affecting and being affected that characterize each thing’ (1988a: 125).
concerns extensive dimensions such as length, size or volume. These sensory variations do not impact upon an *existing* subject or audience, but actually operate to produce or make up new forms of subjectivity: new ways of thinking, moving and acting within the world. It is in this sense that aesthetics connects to ethics, and becomes an ethico-aesthetics.

Ethico-aesthetics is concerned with the ways in which – through art, language, music, architecture, science, social relations and other forms of creativity – we can enact more ethically positive forms of subjectivity, thought and life. ‘Ethically positive’ here should not be understood as a specific pre-determined end-point, but as a relative term designating a mode of life which is more open, uncertain and rich with possibilities than that which otherwise exists. Ethico-aesthetics is thus also concerned with the future, but not with a specific ideal or utopic future that might be attained. Instead it is concerned with opening the future onto new, uncertain and unforeseen potential. It is in this sense concerned that which Deleuze and Guattari call the virtual: the very real, but not yet actualised, potentials which enable the capacity for change within any current arrangement or mode of being. Ethico-aesthetics involves an affirmation of and a commitment to difference. Difference here is not difference in relation to something else – as a negative opposition or relative distinction – but difference in itself and for its own sake. It is a positive difference that generates – or rather ‘germinates’ (Ansell-Pearson 1999) – life itself. Practices of ethico-aesthetics involve opening onto difference by increasing, through aesthetics, the capacity of bodies to affect and be affected in new ways.

In their first major text together, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari (1983) offer an ethico-aesthetic reading of desire which differs dramatically from psychoanalytic versions. Critical of the ways in which psychoanalysis tends to overcode desire and the unconscious with notions of lack, personal trauma, family relationships and individual dysfunction, Deleuze and

---

16 I use the term utopia here in its generally understood sense. By contrast, for Deleuze and Guattari, utopia does not refer to *another* ‘better’ or ‘ideal’ world that might replace the existing world at some point in the future, but rather refers to the capacity of the virtual to intervene in, and revolutionise, this world in the present (Flaxman 2007: 36-7). Or, as Roffe (2007: 40) puts it: ‘For Deleuze, utopia is a matter not of hope nor of an ideal society, but of who we are, and what we are capable of, here and now’.
Guattari develop an alternative approach, which they call schizoanalysis. In contrast to psychoanalysis, which reads expressions of desire in terms of what they might signify, schizoanalysis instead focuses on what they produce or make possible. Deleuze and Guattari write: ‘desiring-machines… represent nothing, signify nothing, mean nothing, and are exactly what one makes of them, what is made with them, what they make in themselves’ (1983: 288). Here desire is no longer tied to lack, nor to individual subjects, but is conceptualised as a positive, productive and a-subjective energy or life-force. Desire flows between bodies, and it is these flows which generate life, by enabling bodies – and relations between bodies – to continually change. Expressions of desire, no matter how unusual, are not read as dysfunctions but as forms of differentiation and connection which are central to life itself. This is because flows of desire, in all their manifestations, are that which enable bodies to transform their collective capacities for affecting and being affected.

Conceptualised as collective and productive, expressions and investments of desire can no longer be separated from broader social, economic, political and ethical concerns. Indeed, desire here becomes intricately tied to contemporary capitalism: not because capitalism thrives on some kind of individual desire ‘for’ things that one lacks, but rather because capitalism can be understood to produce and thrive on the same kind of desire flows which enable life itself, and which can also – under different conditions – generate revolutionary change. To the extent that psychoanalysis promotes the idea of desire as lack, it can be thought of as implicitly helping to produce the sense of individual lack upon which consumer capitalism relies. Similarly, to the extent that psychoanalysis keeps the study of desire separate from that of capitalism, economics and politics (focusing it instead upon the individual and the family), it can also be understood to implicitly promote the cult of individualism which keeps capitalism functioning. And to the extent that psychoanalysis ‘diagnoses’ unusual expressions of desire as madness, schizophrenia or psychosis – as ‘problems’ which need to be fixed, rather than as positive attempts to transform bodily, social and economic relations – it can be understood to implicitly block potentially revolutionary flows of desire from escaping out into the broader social field.
It is in their sequel text to *Anti-Oedipus – A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* – however, that Deleuze and Guattari (1987) give ethico-aesthetics its strongest, and most active, expression. Here the authors begin to put into practice their schizoanalytic framework of desire, drawing together ideas from a wide range of generally discrete fields – including biology, literature, mathematics, art, zoology, cinema, chemistry, psychoanalysis, physics, economics and geography – to show how each one connects not only to the others, but also to the possibilities for social politics, life and ethics. In doing so, the authors provide not only a tracing of existing philosophical and disciplinary knowledges, but also a mapping of new ways of understanding and acting upon the world. In other words, they go beyond philosophical critique to the active creation and affirmation of new forms of thought and life (Patton 1987b: 1161). Their text is designed not only to explain new ways of thinking and living, but to produce – in the reader – new modes of thought and life. As such, their work can be understood not only as a philosophy of ethics\(^\text{17}\), but as a practice of ethics, or more specifically: a practice of ethico-aesthetics.

Ethico-aesthetics is therefore not simply an ethics or an ontology, but a mode of active engagement with the world. It is mode of engagement that still involves ethical evaluation, but it is an evaluation that gets made in and through its embodied enactment and affirmation, rather than through distant judgment or critique. And it is an evaluation that takes place according to tendencies and trajectories – according to the kind of life a certain event or relation implies – rather than according to some kind of underlying essence or meaning. An ethico-aesthetics requires going beyond deconstruction and critique to the active creation of new ways of thinking, relating and existing. It requires, in other words, not simply a tracing but a mapping. I will now examine what this means for the ways in which this thesis has been imagined, researched and written.

There are several interconnected methodological principles which can be discerned from Deleuze and Guattari’s ethico-aesthetic approach. These principles are not fixed rules, but tendencies which have come to guide how I approach this thesis and its research aims and methodologies. The first principle relates to the kinds of questions

\(^{17}\) Foucault has referred to Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus* as ‘a book of ethics’ (1983: xiii).
that are to be asked in this thesis, which, as Deleuze notes, invariably determine the kinds of answers we will get (1990: 54, 1988c: 16). He writes: ‘the problem always has the solution it deserves, in terms of the way it is stated… [and] the conditions under which it is determined as a problem... It is here that humanity makes its own history’ (1988c: 16).

An ethico-aesthetic approach to the construction of problems is less concerned with what something means, or why something is the way it is, and instead is interested in how something works, what affects it produces, and what sorts of things it makes possible. An ethico-aesthetics is not interested in interpreting, but in experimenting: in exploring the potential for change in a given situation. Accordingly, in this thesis I am not at all interested in ascertaining why people use drugs, or what it means when they do. Rather, I am interested in exploring how they inject drugs: in what contexts and in connection with what other bodies and social practices. I am not interested in interpreting drug use, but experimenting with what an ethico-aesthetics of drug use might offer. I am interested, more specifically, in the affects that are produced through, and in relation to, drug use, and in the kinds of bodies and social relations these make possible.

A second, closely related principle concerns the kind of answers which are to be sought. An ethico-aesthetics is concerned with opening up, rather than closing off, the range of future possibilities available for a given body or social relation (see Patton 2003: 17). As such, it is not interested in finding a solution (2003: 21), which might act as some sort of end-point, but in opening up the possibilities for movement: multiplying, rather than reducing, the possible endings. In this thesis, therefore, I do not seek to find a solution to drug use or drug related harm, nor to come up with a list of set practices which will – if applied – reduce drug related harm. Nor do I seek to come up with a framework or list of categories which might make identifying drug use patterns and harms simpler and more satisfying. Rather, I seek to open up the ways in which we can think about drug use and harm, and the range of ways in which we might be able to respond. In other words, I do not aim for simplification, closure or certainty, but for complexification, complication and uncertainty.
A third principle concerns the question of structure and the ways in which a story might be told. An ethico-aesthetic approach to writing eschews narrative structure, hierarchy and linearity. It suggests ‘another way of travelling and moving: proceeding from the middle, through the middle, coming and going rather than starting and finishing’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 25). Rather than support the dominant, tidy fantasy of neat beginnings and endings, an ethico-aesthetics seeks to affirm the endless ‘middles’ which together – in no particular order or hierarchy – make up the world. In the rest of this thesis, therefore, I have tried to avoid linear narratives, causes and effects, and hierarchical structures. Thus while thesis conventions – along with my interest in making the story as easy to read as possible – have necessitated that I offer some sort of orderly beginning and end, I have endeavoured to ensure that the conclusion is less a form of closure than it is an ‘opening’, highlighting some possible trajectories and leads. I have also attempted to write each chapter such that it makes sense on its own – as a kind of ‘middle’ or ‘intensive’ ‘plateau’ (1987, see also Patton 1987a: 1096) – without necessarily having to rely upon, or refer back to other chapters. Each chapter does not so much build on concepts in earlier chapters, as build a new intensive space or field within which those concepts might resonate anew.

A fourth principle relates to the kinds of examples and case studies which are chosen to comprise these ‘middles’. An ethico-aesthetic approach does not attempt to search out the most normal, general or typical examples of a given subject matter or issue, such that they might come to represent, stand in for, or be generalisable across a broader set of examples or practices. Instead, it operates by seeking out the unusual, the irregular, the extraordinary – in other words, the ‘outliers’ – in order to experiment with the specific potentials they open up. For it is through such extraordinary and exceptional examples that we can begin to be drawn away ‘from the order of common sense to the chaos of singularities’ (Colebrook 2002: 36). The four examples that I examine in this thesis – the drug-using body; the spaces of urban injecting; public overdose memorials; and drug-referenced advertising – are therefore intended to be neither representative nor generalisable, but intensive case-examples through which we can explore new ways of thinking and acting. By focusing on these examples, I am not at all suggesting that these are the most important, nor the most significant aspects of injecting drug use. There are many more examples which could have been
experimented with: including drug references in film, literature or music; practices of drug treatment and rehabilitation; drug dealing; drug user organisations/groups, and so on. Those I have selected to focus on were not randomly chosen, but rather were chosen because they offer intensive examples of the concerns of this thesis, and because when I connected them up to Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts, I found that something new could be produced.

A fifth principle concerns the connection of theory and concepts to each example or case study, and the ways in which they can be used to open up the field of thought. An ethico-aesthetic approach treats theory not as a framework to be applied (Patton 2000: 5), but as a collection of ‘tools’ which can be used to pry open a given situation or issue (Deleuze 2004: 208). Although this analogy suggests a kind of rigidity, concepts are not at all static, but are themselves transformed – however slightly – through their encounters with particular issues or examples (Patton 2000: 16-7). As Deleuze and Guattari suggest, theory and concepts only really come ‘alive’ through being put to work (1994: 16). When concepts are treated as a framework to be ‘applied’, they tend to work in such a way that the field to which they are applied begins to take on an expected or pre-determined shape (Massumi 2002: 17). By contrast, when concepts are treated as tools which can be used to experiment within a field, they are as opened to the possibility of being transformed by the encounter as the issue itself is. The test of any concept is ‘ultimately pragmatic: in the end, their value is determined by the uses to which it can be put’ (Patton 2000: 6). Instead of asking: Is it true?, an ethico-aesthetics asks: Does it work? Does it produce something new, useful or interesting? In this thesis, therefore, I do not seek to apply concepts, so much as experiment with them, to see what they can pry open or produce. I treat Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts not as concrete, definable and containable entities, but as abstract ideas which make sense in and through their connection to particular examples and practices.

This leads to a sixth principle, which concerns the role of philosophy in bringing about new modes of thought. An ethico-aesthetics, as I mentioned earlier, involves going beyond simply tracing – beyond that is, drawing attention to, problematising and critiquing existing relations – to actively mapping and creating new forms of
thought. In the rest of this thesis, therefore, I spend very little time on critiquing and deconstructing existing models, concepts, philosophies or research projects. Instead of finding fault with others’ work, I try to focus instead on the uses to which it can be put and the new possibilities it might enable. Rather than have to agree or disagree with every aspect of a writer’s work – something no doubt impossible – I instead seek to experiment with and affirm those aspects or concepts which resonate in a field and which produce something. I do not seek to continually compare the work of Deleuze and Guattari, for example, to the work of other theorists, nor do I seek to spend much time focusing on the aspects of their work which I find less useful. An ethico-aesthetics is more interested in affirmation than criticism, in creation rather than destruction. Thought, for Deleuze and Guattari (1994), is not something which seeks a truth, nor is it defined in relation to a truth, but is a movement which is inherently creative (Patton 1996: 1, 6). As a creative movement, thought is thus itself both utopian (13) and revolutionary (2003: 26). Art and science and philosophy are all creative and transformative, however they can be understood to create in different ways: through, respectively, the creation of percepts, functives and concepts, which each enable something new to be felt, imagined or thought. This thesis does not, therefore, seek to create in the same sense that art or science create, nor does it seek to create in the exact same sense that philosophy can be said to create. Instead it aims to create by connecting concepts to a field of social practice – namely injecting drug use – such that it enables new modes of thought and, through this, new possibilities for social practice.

Perhaps the most important principle of all – which might be thought of as the nth or infinitive principle – relates to the importance of bringing tracings and mappings into connection with one another. For Deleuze and Guattari, tracings are problematic, because they reduce the world into a single, thin dimension of possibility. However tracings are in many cases necessary: in order to take stock, in order to find blockages, in order to find a foothold from which to begin to map. The crucial thing, therefore, is not that one avoid tracings altogether, but that one refuses to stop at tracings. ‘The tracing’, Deleuze and Guattari write, ‘should always be put back on the map’ (1987: 13). Throughout this thesis I inevitably produce both tracings and mappings. However I aim to ensure that the tracings are always left open to movement. Instead of findings,
I seek to produce intensive nodes, trajectories and ‘ideas’. Instead of conclusions, I seek to make openings: to connect the tracings up to future maps – maps which are yet to be drawn, and which open out on to a future.
2 Desiring Bodies

As an assemblage, [an injecting drug-using body] has only itself, in connection with other assemblages and in relation to other bodies without organs. We will never ask what [an injecting drug-using body] means, as signified or signifier; we will not look for anything to understand in it. We will ask what it functions with, in connection with what other things it does or does not transmit intensities, in which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed, and with what bodies without organs it makes its own converge. [An injecting drug-using body] exists only through the outside and on the outside. [An injecting drug-using body] itself is a little machine (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 4).

The work of Deleuze and Guattari is perhaps best conceived as a collection of machinic concepts that can be plugged into other machines or concepts and made to work. This is how I approach their writing, and why – despite initial misgivings – I have transformed the above excerpt (surreptitiously replacing the concept ‘book’ with ‘injecting drug-using body’) to suit the purposes of this chapter. In making this transformation, I soon discovered that it became a perfect little language-machine: not only articulating where I want to take the concept of injecting drug use, but also [through its parentheses] expressing the open applicability of Deleuze and Guattari’s work. Insert body of choice: a sexual body; a bicycle; a language; a body of art; a film – the excerpt works for them all. In this openly mutating state the passage introduces some of the key concepts in Deleuze and Guattari’s ethico-aesthetic project: becomings, bodies without organs and multiplicities. It also, more explicitly, outlines their project to take thought, and ethics, away from internal meanings, causes, and essences, and toward surface affects, intensities and flows.

However it is the particular concept of the body activated by the excerpt – the concept of the body as machinic assemblage – that I find most useful to the task of rethinking injecting drug use. It is a concept that unravels the modern fantasy of the body as a stable, unified, bounded entity, and gives a language to the multitude of connections that bodies form with other bodies (human and otherwise). A body’s function or

18 I have replaced the term ‘a book’ in the original excerpt by the term ‘an injecting drug-using body’.
potential or ‘meaning’ becomes entirely dependent on which other bodies or machines it forms assemblages with. A bicycle, for example, can be thought of as a machine that doesn’t begin to work or necessarily have a particular meaning until it connects up with another machine: when it connects up with a cyclist, it becomes a vehicle, a machine of movement; when it is placed in a gallery, it becomes an artwork, a machine of artistic affect and debate (Colebrook 2002). A cigarette is similarly multiple: when smoked it becomes a drug; when held seductively at the end of one’s fingertips it becomes an object of beauty; when shown in a film it becomes a plot device (Klein 1993). And an injecting drug-using body is no different: when it connects up to a bicycle, it becomes a cyclist; to a needle and syringe, an injector; to a public health discourse, a member of ‘risk’ group; to a medical clinic, a recovering ‘addict’; to a family, a ‘loved one’. In this way it can be understood as relating directly to the flows, intensities, segments and energies of the bodies that it comes in contact with. And in this way, each injecting drug-using body becomes a multiplicity.

While numerous writers have begun to make movements toward rethinking drug use via Deleuze and Guattari’s work, very few have explored the drug-using body in detail. In this chapter I map out some of the specific implications of Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy for rethinking the injecting drug-using body. I begin by exploring what happens to the subject (the ‘drug user’, the ‘addict’) when it gives way to a concept of the body as a multiplicity. Following Deleuze and Guattari, I do not ask what an injecting drug-using body ‘means’ or signifies, but rather, what affects its assemblages produce and what flows of desire they cut off. I then continue this trajectory by connecting the drug-using body to four specific concepts developed by Deleuze and Guattari: destratification, desire, becomings and the Body without Organs (BwO). In doing so, I confront feminism’s ambivalent relationship to Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of becoming-woman, and suggest that – although precarious – it is a concept which has value in relation to social politics and the injecting drug-using body. I also confront Deleuze and Guattari’s bleak conception of drug-use as a limit case or botched body, arguing that the pessimism this engenders can be strategically sidestepped using Deleuze and Guattari’s other philosophical and ethical

20 Dale (2002) and Fitzgerald (2002a; 2002b; 1998) are two notable exceptions.
tools: tools which can, by contrast, open up (rather than close off) our perceptions of the drug-using body and its relationships to the world it encounters.

**From Subjectivity to the Body-in-Movement**

In contrast to Enlightenment ideas of individual subjectivity, agency and autonomy, Deleuze and Guattari conceive of bodies as always already interconnected, always already in composition with other bodies and their affects. Where Enlightenment models see individuals in a hierarchical, vertical tree-like way – with arborescent histories, roots, and a transcendent truth, God or higher morality above – Deleuze and Guattari envisage individuals as noting more (or less) than intensive nodes upon a continuous, multi-directional, asymmetrical, rhizome-like structure. For Deleuze and Guattari, then, a body (human, animal, social, institutional, mechanical, biological, chemical) has no interior truth or meaning, but makes sense only corporeally, through its external connections and affects. Following Spinoza, they write: ‘we know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body’ (1987: 257).

So where does this leave the individual subject? And identity? If we are to talk only of the injecting drug-using body and its material affects, where does the ‘drug user’ or ‘addict’ disappear to? As Patton suggests, Deleuze and Guattari do not seek to completely abandon the idea of identity, but simply come up with ‘a form of identity or unity which not identical to itself’ (2000: 29). In other words, a model of identity or self-hood which takes into account its inherent capacity – and indeed necessity – for continual differentiation. Approaching the body in this way does not mean ignoring subjectivity and identity but instead involves shifting it from the centre of analysis to the periphery. Subjectivity here can be understood as simply one of the many ways in which human or social bodies come to be organised – or stratified – in the post-Enlightenment social world. Instead of there being identity first and foremost, followed by the appearance of different forms of identity, what is primary is differentiation itself, followed by its stratification into forms of identity (32, 34-5). This model not only shifts ideas of individual agency and autonomy, but also the static idea of being. As Deleuze and Guattari write: ‘the fabric of the rhizome is the
conjunction, “and…and…and…”… [which] carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb “to be” (1987: 25).

In order to comprehend the body – a site of chaos and flux and complexity – we tend to think of it in terms of discrete and static categories of being and identity. These categories, which necessarily operate as processes of inclusion and exclusion (Lupton 1999: 131), come to ordered and delimited according to hierarchical binary presuppositions: human/animal, man/woman, healthy/unhealthy, lawful/criminal, hetero/gay, clean/junkie, and so on. Binaries that bodies can never fully correspond to. As Massumi explains:

No real body ever entirely coincides with either category. A body only approaches its assigned category as a limit: it becomes more or less “feminine” or more or less “masculine” depending on the degree to which it conforms to the connections and trajectories laid out for it by society… “Man” and “Woman” as such have no reality other than that of logical abstraction (1992: 86).

When bodies naturally fall outside these binaries, or try to claim a different identity, they are rarely granted anything outside a third term (‘bi-sexual’, ‘recovering addict’) that remains reliant upon, and limited to, those binary relations. Multiplicities thus reduced to binaries and trinities. Manifold potential reduced to a discrete set of bodily possibilities. To the human body, the social world declares: You will be a boy or a girl; a smoker or a non-smoker; a civilised human being (with all bodily parts fulfilling civilised ‘human’ functions) or an animal. Your choice. You will subscribe to modern selfhood (and all its bodily and linguistic demands) or you’ll be rejected:

You will be organised, you will be an organism, you will articulate your body… otherwise you’re just depraved. You will be signifier and signified… otherwise you’re just a deviant. You will be a subject, nailed down as one… otherwise you’re just a tramp (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 159)… You will be allowed to live and speak, but only after every outlet has been obstructed (14).

The pressure to stratify and organise as a static, unified subject is strong. Yet the social world, particularly under capitalist democracies, rarely forces bodies to comply (Massumi 1992). It hardly needs to. We tend to desire our own order and

---

21 I discuss the concept of capitalism further in Chapter 5 of this thesis. It is worth noting here, however, that there are limitations to the notion of a capitalist democracy. I use the term here then in its most general, and generally understood meaning: to refer to those social systems which have capitalist economies and reasonably functioning democratic political and social processes.
organisation: to make our own movements toward stratification and the reassuring constancy it provides. Stratification is thus one of the ways in which we actively and strategically put ourselves together in the world, in order to have a political social voice and to say “I”. We become a subject in order to interact successfully in the social world. To do so, we must accept an identity (male/female, hetero/gay/bi) and a particular way of organising our bodies (mouth for eating, arms for lifting, nose for smelling, eyes for seeing, lungs for breathing, and so on); otherwise we will be incomprehensible. We must reduce our own fluid complexities (‘I am male and sometimes like to look female and am mostly hetero but sometimes gay but only on Tuesdays and I occasionally use drugs but only when the moon is full…’) to discrete categories (androgynous, bi, drug user). Languages, institutions and systems of thought all demand it, and we rarely fail to accede. A body that smokes once becomes a smoker. A body that injects twice becomes an addict. A complex rhizomatic flow of multiplicities reduced to a single grid of social strata. A grid of organisation and predetermination (male, hetero, junkie) that limits the connections our bodies can make with other bodies: reducing our potential for transformation; our potential for difference.

I would like, therefore, to problematise the idea that there is such thing as a ‘drug user’ (existing over time) or an ‘addict’ (once an alcoholic always an alcoholic). Instead I propose that we begin to rethink the injecting drug-using body as an ephemeral entity: a machine that exists only in its moment of connection with a drug, the injecting equipment, a spatial context and the specific affects that a particular assemblage enables. Categories such as ‘drug user’, ‘addict’ and ‘junkie’ can be thought of instead as stratifications of bodies: stratifications that are both imposed by institutions (of law, medicine, public health, and so on) and undertaken by bodies for practical, although not necessarily positive, purposes.

This is not to say that a body cannot form assemblages which move toward an addictive tendency, but rather that this addictiveness is a propensity: tied not to a body or a drug but rather to a specific potential, and judged according to how much a relation or assemblage tends toward this limit. And it is a limit that is never fully attainable; no body can ever be fully ‘addicted’, only ever in a process of addiction. Addiction as a verb: a doing word, not a descriptive noun. Each injecting drug use
assemblage can then be mapped out in terms of its particular relations and specific affects – and not reduced a priori to a single process. For each drug assemblage produces different bodily affects, and enables different flows of desire.

**Desire**

Drug use involves desire, but not in the sense that there is a subject who desires. Desire, for Deleuze and Guattari, is not something that a subject has, nor is it something that a subject can repress. Desire is, as I mentioned in Chapter 1, that which moves between bodies, forming connections and producing affects. It is productive and creative. It ‘does not take as its object persons or things, but the entire surroundings that it traverses, the vibrations and flows of every sort to which it is joined, introducing therein breaks and captures’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 292).

Desire, in this sense, is implicated in all social and political processes as a primary active force, rather than simply a negativity, or a response to an unfulfilled need or lack (as in psychoanalysis) (Patton 2000: 70). Desire makes things, creates connections and produces or actualises worlds. Where there are no flows of desire, there can be no movement, no change, no life. This is the extreme or limit point of stratification: catatonia.

Unless it reaches this limit point, a stratified body always has flows of desire moving through it. These flows may become habitualised – channeled into particular social institutions, relations, identities, spaces and movements – but they nevertheless continue to flow. The stratified body does not so much desire destratification, but rather tends toward destratification by the unleashing of desire: by the freeing of its flows from the social codes that obstruct and limit it. Similarly, the injecting drug-using body can be thought of as not necessarily desiring heroin, nor even desiring its pleasurable affects, but rather as using heroin to create a particular assemblage that will unleash flows of desire. Desire here is not subjective, but ‘simply machinic… it makes connections’ (Olkowski 1999: 103).

Yet this desire – productive, collective, machinic and life affirming – is constantly being over-coded in Western thought by notions of lack and pleasure. As Deleuze notes, ‘the first malediction that weighs on desire like a Christian curse, and goes back
to the Greeks, is that desire is lack. The second malediction is: desire will be satisfied by pleasure’ (2001: 95). When desire is forced into association with lack and pleasure, and when flows of desire are traced back, through psychoanalysis, onto the outline of the childhood and the family (such as whenever the Oedipus complex is invoked), a limiting structural framework is superimposed upon the body. Psychoanalysis thus operates as ‘a whole system of projections, of reductions’ (1995: 17). It creates a particular desiring-machine, which channels desire inwards toward the self and the family, and blocks other flows: other deterritorialising, and potentially revolutionary, flows.

Masochism is provided as a good example of a flow of desire that has been poorly represented by psychoanalysis (Deleuze 1989a, Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 155). Masochism is often thought to arise through a desire for pain, or through a process whereby pain is perverted to become pleasure. Instead it can be thought of as an event in which pain is part of the machine which allows desire to flow. The mistake is in assuming that pleasure and desire must be linked. Pleasure can be extracted from desire, but is not its necessary extension or end-point. Pleasure is, instead, one way in which flows of desire are made tangible within a stratified body. In other words, it is a stratification of desire: a reduction of the fractal of desire to a single plane, and an interruption to its flow (Deleuze 2001; Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 154, 156).

Those who cannot understand how someone can take ‘pleasure’ in breathing tobacco smoke in to their lungs, injecting themselves, or in having their backside whipped raw, are missing the point. It is not that one necessarily pursues something for the pleasure it brings; one may instead pursue something for nothing more (or less) than the process of desiring itself. Actual pleasure is no more an essential part of drug use or masochism than it is of tattooing, nose-piercing, scarification, watching horror films, eating lemons or a chilli-con-carne, or downing shots of vodka. Such activities may involve a certain joy or thrill that has nothing to do with personal pleasure but everything to do with a creative or collective flow of desire. As Deleuze and Guattari note, ‘there is, in fact, a joy that is immanent to desire… a joy that implies no lack or impossibility and is not measured by pleasure’ (1987: 155). Barthes’ notion of jouissance (1975, cited in Deleuze 2001: 97), a term drawn from Lacan (1992) but operating without the psychoanalytic underpinnings of Lacan’s concept, perhaps
comes closest to this idea of a joy that is distinct from pleasure. Barthes refers to a
text of jouissance as one ‘that imposes a state of loss… that discomforts… [that]
unsettles the reader’s historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency
of his tastes, values memories’ (1975, cited in Deleuze 2001: 97). Jouissance is, in
short, that which destratifies.

Whenever Western thought fails to conceive of the jouissance embedded within an
injecting drug use assemblage, it also fails to recognise the capacity of that
assemblage to produce something new. Cultural texts, such as those by Huxley
(1959), Artaud (1976), and Burroughs (1977), have long recognised the productive
capacities – in terms of perception, art, social interaction, and so on – of drug-using
assemblages. Yet within mainstream Western discourse – within, for example, the
machines of medicine, psychiatry, public health, law, and the media – psychoanalytic
notions of lack, pleasure and the family have so thoroughly over-coded desire that it is
difficult to think and talk outside their terms. The drug-using body may have desires
that flow through its connections in all directions: toward a change of self, of time and
space, toward a connection with sensation, with other bodies; toward new perceptions,
new languages, new ways of being. Yet most Western thought persists in reading
desire back to a prior deficiency: in ‘saying: if desire exists, it is the very sign, or the
very fact, that you are lacking something’ (Deleuze 2001: 101). Collective and
productive flows of desire are thereby reduced to the will of an individual subject,
with an individual lack, who experiences individual pleasures. A subject who cannot
desire except as an expression of a lack and for the attainment of pleasure.

In mainstream Western thought, therefore, the drug-using body immediately becomes
evidence of an underlying deficiency (chemical, biological, genetic, psychological or
social) which must be treated. Furthermore, by retaining a Cartesian mind-body split,
and continually opposing the irrational desires of the drug-using body to the
rationality and reason of the ideal autonomous mind, Western thought renders the
drug-using body even more deficient; lacking the free-will necessary to control its
desires (Valverde 1998). The injecting drug-using body thereby simultaneously
becomes both more of a subject and less of a subject: for while its desires are
continually over-coded and channeled toward particular stratas, it is only those most
wretched subjectivities (those of the will-less addict or diseased junkie) which it is
allowed to inhabit; subjectivities which are both rigid and abject. However, even the most rigidly and abjectly codified of bodies can become affected by destratifying flows of desire at some point or another: flows which cause them to fly off along a different trajectory, a different line, a different becoming.

For a body is never entirely happy with its stratified existence. At the same time as we are drawn to the reassurance and stability of subjectification (female, middle-class, hetero) and bodily organisation (lungs for breathing, tongue for speaking, ears for listening), we are also pulled in other directions: toward other possibilities. Perhaps the lungs could be for absorbing nicotine; the tongue for licking; the ears for piercing? Perhaps the veins could be made to transport heroin instead of oxygen; the teeth used to tighten the tourniquet? Perhaps new territories could be created and inhabited? As Deleuze and Guattari ask:

> Is it really so sad and dangerous to be fed up with seeing with your eyes, breathing with your lungs, swallowing with your mouth, talking with your tongue, thinking with your brain… ? Why not walk on your head, sing with your sinuses, see through your skin, breathe with your belly… ? (1987: 150-1).

Destratification begins as soon as a body steps outside of its codified ‘self’ and explores other modes of existence: other modes of becoming. It begins, as Braidotti suggests, ‘when one decides that the old coordinates of the social and symbolic system will not do’ (1997: 70). A shift in bodily perception is all that is required. But this is not as easy as it sounds. The destratifying body must step outside of its unified mode of perceiving and interacting with the world as a subject (male, white, human) and, by connecting itself up with another body (a woman, an Indigenous man, a refugee, a bird, a plant, a food, a drug, a drug user), begin to perceive differently. ‘To reach, not a point where one no longer says I, but the point where it is no longer of any importance whether on says I’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 3).

The majority of us destratify quite regularly, but only in very minute ways, such as not getting off the train at the regular stop, saying hello to a homeless man on the corner, stopping on the way to work to sit in the park and watch ducks, missing work altogether, and so on. These destratifications are small changes in ways our bodies connect the world; they involve shifts away from habitualised, normalised existence.
Such minute destratifications, however, will rarely have an enduring affect. Most often they are quickly recaptured and restratified, and we continue on our regular way: continuing to say ‘I’ and to know where and who we are.

Many of us, however, crave a more potent line of flight, and many of us use drugs to launch it. Alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, ecstasy, LSD, speed, cocaine, heroin: each with its own lines of perceptual destratification. To become another person for the night. To experience time differently. To see and hear and think and feel in a new way. Escape-routes from delimited identities and blocked potentials. Escape-routes from the strata. With the right ingredients, almost any assemblage can generate a line of escape: in masochism, the whip and the boots; in art, the blank canvass and fresh red paint; in raving, the ecstasy and the thump of the techno, the lights and the crowd; in street-based injecting, the heroin and a syringe, spoon, tourniquet, some water and a laneway. As Deleuze and Guattari note: ‘You don’t deviate from the majority unless there is a little detail that starts to swell and carries you off… Anything at all can do the job, but it always turns out to be a political affair’ (1987: 292).

Drug use can destratify the body because it has the capacity to alter modes of perception. It can enable a ‘subject’ to stand outside its ‘self’ and to begin to sense the world, and the flow of time, differently. For Klein (1993), smoking provides just such a shift. He writes:

The moment of taking a cigarette allows one to open a parenthesis in the time of ordinary experience, a space and a time of heightened attention… evoked through the ritual of fire, smoke, cinder connecting to hand, lungs, breath, and mouth. It procures a little rush of infinity that alters perspectives, however slightly, and permits, albeit briefly, an ecstatic standing outside of oneself (16).

All drugs can transform our relationship to ourselves and the world. So can other forms of consumption, such as eating, gambling, watching films, listening to music, and so on. As Probyn suggests in relation to food: ‘in eating we find ourselves in various assemblages, produced and producing ourselves anew’ (2000: 4).

Such forms of consumption however, rarely end up being revolutionary affairs. Generally they enable momentary lines of flight that are then easily and quickly recaptured by the strata. Within each drug-using assemblage, for example, the body
not only connects to the drug (its texture, its smell, its taste, its appearance, its affects on perception and the body, and so on), but also connects to other bodies and machines (people, substances, knowledges, institutions, corporations, and so on) any of which may re-capture it, limiting and redirecting its movements. A cigarette assemblage also connects up the lungs with tar and the blood stream with nicotine. An injecting assemblage can also connect the injecting body up to infections, viruses, vein damage or overdose. These are couplings which can weaken the body; slowly reducing its potential to join up to other bodies and launch new lines of flight. And as a body begins to repeat the same drug-use assemblage more and more often (habit), that assemblage – and its various components – can become rigidified. The body’s organs and pathways begin to sediment: the hand for holding the syringe, the skin for accepting the needle, the veins to transport the heroin, the voice to announce ‘I am an addict’. A restratification occurs, one that may be stronger than ever before and which, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, is likely to be ‘all the more rigid for being marginal’ (1987: 285).

Blockages upon the body thus take place – simultaneously – at the level of bodily habit and organisation, and at the level of the social strata. Various social practices and knowledges – including those of law, medicine, psychiatry, public health, moral reasoning, spatial planning, cinema, art, music, media, advertising, government policy, and so on – must also be understood as forming part of any drug-use assemblage. These practices and knowledges can directly stratify the body – as when police carry out an arrest or an assault, or when detoxification or overdose-response drugs are administered. They can also stratify the body indirectly – as when a body finds itself being treated as ‘risky’, ‘dirty’, ‘criminal’, ‘dependant’ or ‘addicted’, or when a scene from a film comes to be incorporated into the drug use assemblage, imbuing it with a particular sensation or affect. While some stratifications can be good – and in fact some level of stratification is, as Deleuze and Guattari note, necessary for life itself (1987: 160-1, 270) – stratifications must also be understood as necessarily limiting.

Categories of identity, for example, reduce the capacity for relations between bodies because they rely on, and reproduce, an external, negative notion of difference: a difference which consists in its differing from, or in relation to, an ‘other’. For
Deleuze, difference is, first and foremost, an internal – rather than relational or external – process (1994: 20-7). A body is produced through an internal differenciation (as when cells differentiate) and, over time, continually differs from itself. This view presents difference as positive and productive, rather than negative and subtractive; difference is that which produces life itself, and enables the production of the new. This concept of difference disrupts the idea – popular in contemporary socio-political thought – of a self which is constituted through its difference to an ‘other’, and allows us to think relationships between bodies as productive of (rather than reliant upon) difference.

The significance of representational identity-politics for having improved the material conditions of many minority groups does not go unrecognised by Deleuze and Guattari. Yet they also note its limitations. They write:

> It is, of course, indispensable for women to conduct a molar politics, with a view to winning their own organism, their own history, their own subjectivity… But it is dangerous to confine oneself to such a subject, which does not function without drying up a spring or stopping a flow (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 276).

Identifying and speaking as a Woman, for example, in order to challenge the patriarchal social relations that continue to structure and limit the material ways in which women can move through the world, has strategic socio-political uses; it should not be entirely abandoned as an active political force. Yet politics should not confine itself to this molar realm which, no matter how radical, continues to reinforce stratified divisions between sexed bodies (see also: Gatens 2000: 68). For Deleuze and Guattari, molar politics needs to be intertwined with a molecular politics of becomings, which sets about gradually undoing molar identity altogether.

**Becomings**

Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of becoming (see especially 1987: 232-309) offers a way of conceptualising life, subjectivity and the body, without relying upon a restrictive, static notion of being. Becomings express the movements which a body perpetually undergoes: movements away from one mode of intensive life and toward another. Becoming is always a movement, a line, an in-between. It is a better way to
conceive of a corporeal body than the concept of being, which expresses no more than
the appearance of a relatively stable moment in the flows of becoming that make up
life (Colebrook 2002: 125). For even those bodies which appear to be constant, and
whose territories appear to be fixed, are in continuous processes of becoming.
Becoming-student, -lover, -woman, -police officer, -friend. Becoming-drug-user, -
junkie. Becoming-addict. Becoming-rehabilitated. Becomings exist independently of
the bodies which undergo them (Patton 1996: 13). While the state of being ‘addicted’,
for example, would necessarily be an attribute of a body, the event of ‘becoming
addicted’ can be understood as ‘a change of state which does not adhere in the bod[y]
but is attributed to [it]’ (13).

A becoming is, in other words, a movement of destratification, launched by an
interaction between bodies. In becoming, bodies are transformed such that they take
on some of the potentialities – or powers – of another body. A becoming-cat might
occur, for example, when a human body lets go of some of its normal subjective
boundaries, and allows itself – or finds itself – connecting up to a cat’s field of
perception and potentiality. The process might be started by accident or by strategy,
and might be precipitated through the use of a collar, a bowl of milk, a fence, a patch
of sun, or even a mouse or a bird (see for example Massumi 1992: 93-5). However, a
becoming-cat does not involve imitating a cat, for imitation and mimicry fail to
dissolve the distinction between two separate bodies (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 274,
Massumi 1992: 96). Instead it requires moving through the world in composition with
the ways in which a cat would move through, and respond to, that world. A
becoming-cat or becoming-other does not imitate but merges. It involves an
integration of modes of perception and action: an altering of the body’s mode of
perception – its speed and its quality – in such a way that it moves in proximity to
another body’s mode of perception. A becoming-cat thus involves a surging of affect,
an integration of the particular hæceities of cat-ness and human-ness:

becoming is to extract particles between which one establishes the
relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness that are closest to
what one is becoming, and through which one becomes (Deleuze and

In other words, the body extracts, and enters into, the relations of movement and rest
that most closely resemble those of a cat: walking on all fours, lapping milk, using the
tongue for cleaning, curling up in the sun, arching one’s back and stretching one’s toes, chasing a mouse or a bird, and so on. Becomings also do not involve an arrival; one does not actually become that which one is moving towards (1987: 293). In a becoming-dog, for example, ‘you do not become a barking molar dog... but by barking, if it is done with enough feeling, with enough necessity and composition, you emit a molecular dog’ (1987: 275).

A body becomes then, by beginning to perceive as closely as possible to how another body perceives. Sensing the world, and moving through the world, as if one were a wolf, or a bird, or a refugee. As if one were an Indigenous person, a police officer, a city planner. A drug user, an addict. The becoming-addict of the drug-using body involves the body entering into relations of movement and rest that most closely correspond to those of addiction: trajectories through time and city space which gradually deviate further and further from regular stratified existence and toward a new – and certainly no less stratified – existence, involving new forms of budgeting, new daily routines, new relations with friends, relatives, police, hospitals, drug dealers. A body never actually becomes an addict, but enters into processes of becoming which move toward, or away from, addiction.

Becomings are always political because they have the power to alter the ways in which the world, and the bodies within it, are perceived. They offer a challenge (and a threat) to the normalised social strata which pulls bodies toward the ideal of subjectivity: toward reason, rationality, autonomy and free-will. Cracks begin to appear in the strata. These cracks make perceptible the fact that no identity category is ever entirely stable; no subject totally unified and consistent; and no mode of organisation fully sedimented. Yet this does not mean that all becomings are revolutionary; it simply means that all have a revolutionary potential (Massumi 1992: 101). The revolutionary power of a destratification is in its collectivity and it contagiousness: its potential to spread its lines of flight.

Becomings-animal feature prominently in the work of Deleuze and Guattari. These are becomings which they find in art (the becomings-bird of Klee), literature (the becoming-whale of Ahab in Moby-Dick and the becoming-beetle of Kafka’s Metamorphosis), cinema (the becoming-rat of Willard), music (the becomings-bird
and becomings-horse in Mozart), and in dreams and psychoanalysis (the becoming-horse of Freud’s Little Hans, the becoming-wolf of Freud’s wolf-man) (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). Becomings-woman\textsuperscript{22} also feature strongly, and are identified as the initial movement that must be collectively undertaken in order to move away from the limitations imposed by molar thought: in order that the regime of molar sexual identification and differentiation (Man, Woman, Hetero, Gay) be dismantled and replaced by molecular relations and assemblages (becomings-woman, becomings-gay and so on). As Deleuze and Guattari make clear, becomings-woman must be undertaken not only by ‘Men’, but also by ‘Women’ (1987: 275-6). This is because a becoming-woman does not involve becoming a ‘Woman’, but rather, moving into composition with the perspectives, social relations, and intensities of movement and rest that are most closely, and molecularly, female (as an unattainable limit). It involves, as Deleuze and Guattari write, ‘emitting particles that enter the relation of movement and rest, or the zone of proximity, of a microfemininity, in other words, that produce in us a molecular woman’ (1987: 275). Becomings-woman can be revolutionary in that they can provide a way of thinking and articulating the entire interconnected social movement that needs to take place toward perceiving as women (feminism) and beyond (shattering the categories of man and woman altogether). A whole social movement away from patriarchy and modernity, and the dominant privileging of rationality, reason, individuality, free-will and self-hood. Away from the language of the majority (Male, White, Heterosexual, Adult, Human). Away from the strata that is so familiar.

Becomings-minoritarian are a broader term for any becomings which move away from dominant – or what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as majority (1987: 105, 469-73) – ways of being: away from, for example, the mode of existence which is Male, White, Heterosexual, Adult, Rational and Human. This dominant social being, although not a numerical majority, operates in the world as a qualitative majority. A becoming-minoritarian, is therefore in no way determined by quantity – but is defined qualitatively. What constitutes the minority is its position of subordination to the

\textsuperscript{22} Early feminist responses to the work of Deleuze and Guattari, were either highly critical (see for example: Irigaray 1985; Jardine 1985; Ahmed 1999) or extremely cautious (see for example: Braidotti 1994; Grosz 1994b), particularly in relation to their concept of becoming-woman. Many have since embraced Deleuze and Guattari’s work and the opportunities it provides for moving beyond identity politics.
majority, and what constitutes the majority is its position of domination. As Deleuze and Guattari suggest: ‘the constant or standard is the average adult-white-heterosexual-European-male-speaking a standard language… Majority assumes a state of power and domination… It assumes a standard measure’ (105). The minority will always far outnumber the majority: and in any case, the majority itself is hard to pin down, and constitutes more of a limit point – or mode of being in the world – than a specific group of people. There are many ‘white men’ for example, who have long undertaken minoritarian-becomings: men who lead humble lives or who fight for women’s rights, or for improvements to Indigenous wellbeing.

Collective becomings-woman and becomings-minoritarian of the drug-using body are also necessary if we are to transform both the ways in which drug use is understood and the ways in which drug-using bodies connect to other social bodies. Although already qualitative social minorities (though not necessarily quantitative minorities), drug-using bodies must themselves enact molecular politics of becoming, in order to open up new possibilities for daily existence. For, as Braidotti notes:

Becoming-minority is a task also for the minorities, who too often tend to be caught in the paralyzing gaze of the master… getting stuck in patterns of reactive repetition. Becoming nomadic means you learn to reinvent yourself… it’s about the desire for change, for flows and shifts of multiple desires (2003: 53).

Minorities such as drug-using bodies must not, in other words, simply wait around for others to enact becomings for them. The drug-using body must also set in motion its own collective becomings-woman, becomings-animal, becomings-imperceptible if the molar identity categories of addict, junkie, criminal, are to ever be dismantled.

The importance of becomings-woman to this project should not be underestimated. The cultural history of drug-use, in literature, cinema, music and popular knowledge, is predominantly (though not exclusively) populated by men. Writers and poets such as De Quincey, Coleridge, Huxley, Cocteau, Kerouac, Ginsberg, Burroughs, Artaud, Leary, Michaux, and musicians such as Lou Reed and Kurt Cobain, are not only all men, but all ‘majority’ men – white, middle-class, educated men who have had great freedom of movement and expression. Men whose drug use has been popularly celebrated. By contrast, the molar Woman of drug use has been historically and
culturally maligned (Boyd 1999; Broom 1994; Denton 2001; Ettorre 1992, 2004; Leigh 1995). Rendered deviant, un-womanly, dirty, diseased, criminal: women who use drugs have been both rigidly, and abjectly, stratified. A becoming-woman of the drug-using body thus involves moving the drug-using body away from these distinct categories of Male and Female (neither of which have an ethically positive trajectory) and into proximity with the specific relations of movement and rest that are most closely those of molecular drug-using women. It involves, in other words, entering into composition with women-drug assemblages which open out into new connections with space and other bodies. It does not involve an identification by drug-using bodies with the molar category of Woman, but a becoming-minoritarian of the drug-using body (both male and female) such that it dislodges pre-understood categories of drug use and thereby works toward bringing forth a becoming-minoritarian of the wider socius.

Such becomings are not simple processes, but require constant work, continual connecting and reconnecting. As Deleuze and Guattari note, ‘becoming-minoritarian is a political affair and necessitates a labor of power, an active micropolitics’ (1987: 292). It also requires caution, for there are inherent dangers in launching revolutionary becomings, which have the potential to shatter the social world as we know it. A body – such as a drug-using body – is always connected to at least three lines or trajectories: on one side it is hooked up to the socius that binds and stratifies it (through, for example, the police, medicine, and the media); on another, it traverses micro-becomings (moments of mutation, connection to other bodies, evasion of capture); and on another it comes into contact with an outside which has the potential to dissolve its connection to the world altogether (catatonia, overdose) (1987: 203-4). Not only do bodies-in-becoming risk be recaptured and re stratified (and locked into position perhaps even more rigidly than before), they can also risk being unable to connect to the strata again at all: unable to go on making connections with other bodies in the social world. For becomings which destratify too quickly, too extremely, can turn into pure desire: nothing but flows and intensities. No connections, no structure, no life. Psychosis. Schizophrenia. Overdose. The limit points of destratification.
The BwO and the Limits of Destratification

Deleuze and Guattari call the limit point of destratification the Body Without Organs (BwO), a term they take from Artaud.23 The BwO is that which remains of the world when all codes and organising structures have gone, or become imperceptible. It is the body, or the body of the world – its desiring potentials and capacities – without any connections, categories, or identities. It ‘is what remains when you take everything away… the phantasy, and significances and subjectifications as a whole’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 151). It is a kind of emptiness, but one that is – for this reason – full of innovation and potentiality. It is the ever-present virtual force which enables difference, change and revolutionary becomings. And it is by moving toward the BwO, and connecting to its desire-flows, that a body is able to destratify, and escape from the limits of its organised and stratified existence.

Yet it is important to retain at least some links with the social world: with organisation and subjectivity. Without such links, a body becomes incapable of forming new assemblages, of differing from itself and creating new lines of flight. Without such links, in other words, the body loses all political and strategic power:

> You have to keep enough of the organism for it to reform each dawn; and you have to keep small supplies of significance and subjectification, if only to turn them against their own systems when the circumstances demand it, when things, persons, even situations force you to; and you have to keep small rations of subjectivity in sufficient quantity to enable you to respond to the dominant reality (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 160).

Destratifications are necessary for life, as well as for political and social change. Yet, in order to be revolutionary and life affirming they must also enable reconnection to the strata. Those destratifications which go too far, which reach the BwO and destroy all possible links to the strata, lead only to ‘black holes’ and lines of death. As Deleuze and Guattari note:

> There are, in fact, several ways of botching the BwO: either one fails to produce it, or one produces it more or less, but nothing is produced on it, intensities do not pass or are blocked. This is because the BwO...

23 Artaud wrote: ‘Man is sick because he is badly constructed… there is nothing more useless than an organ / When you have given him a body without organs / then you will have delivered him from all his automatisms and / restored him to his true liberty’ (Artaud 1982: 61-67, cited in Dale 2002: 99)
is always swinging between the surfaces that stratify it and the plane that sets it free. If you free it with too violent an action, if you blow apart the strata without taking precautions, then instead of drawing the plane you will be killed, plunged into a black hole, or even dragged toward catastrophe (1987: 161).

The ‘hypochondriac’, the ‘paranoid’, the ‘schizophrenic’, the ‘masochist’ and the ‘drug user’ are all bodies which Deleuze and Guattari use to illustrate this terrible limit of destratification. They describe these bodies as empty: as having emptied themselves of organs and organisations so completely that they have become lodged in a dangerous void:

The hypochondriac body… The paranoid body… The schizo body… the drugged body… The masochist body… a dreary parade of sucked-dry, catatonicised, vitrified, sewn-up bodies… Emptied bodies instead of full ones… What happened? Were you cautious enough?… Many have been defeated in this battle (1987: 150).

These are bodies which typify what happens when a body completely empties itself of its organs and organisations: when it goes too far, and fails to maintain strategic links with the socius and with subjectivity. The effect of this image of the drugged body is that drug use and the injecting drug-using body become almost entirely tied up with – or overwhelmed by – their wretched limit: the ‘vitrified and empty’ (1987: 285), ‘dreary’ (160) and ‘sucked-dry’ (150) body of the ‘addict’ (163) or ‘junky’ (153). This is not accidental. For while Deleuze and Guattari do acknowledge the creative potential of drug-use (delighting especially in the work of Artaud and Burroughs), and although they do very briefly question the inevitability of the drug assemblage’s downward spiral to catastrophe, they ultimately argue that the only lines-of-flight that drugs can enable are false and empty ones. Lines of tragedy. It is this uncharacteristic determinism (and perhaps even moralism) that I will now briefly explore, in order to demonstrate the ways in which the work of Deleuze and Guattari can nonetheless be used as a set of tools for productively rethinking injecting drug use.

---

24 With the ‘fascist’ body used to illustrate the awful limit or tendency of rigid stratification.
25 Deleuze and Guattari refer to Artaud; and Burroughs and also write: ‘If the experimentation with drugs has left its mark on everyone, even nonusers, it is because it changed the perceptive coordinates of space-time and introduced us to a universe of microperceptions in which becomings-molecular take over where becomings-animal leave off’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 248).
26 Deleuze and Guattari write: ‘There is a fascist use of drugs, or a suicidal use, but is there also a possible use that would be in conformity with the plane of consistency?’ (1987: 165).
Beyond Deleuze and Guattari’s Empty Limit

In both *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari develop, through concepts such as becomings, desire, rhizomes and machinic assemblages, a philosophical ‘tool box’ which enables thought to move away from essences and internal truths and toward multiplicities, affects and machinic potentials. What matters, for Deleuze and Guattari, is no longer the substance or meaning of a bodily assemblage (the genders, the types of food, the drugs used), but the specific affects it enables. Using this conceptual approach, drug use becomes freed from determinism (drugs are evil; drugs are bad for your health; drugs are addictive; drugs lead only to despair and to death) and open to the possibility of producing different affects, good and bad. However, when Deleuze and Guattari delve into the issue of drug use directly, their conceptualisation is unambiguously negative. Not only do they link drug use to the empty desire-less BwO, as an example of the dangers of too-rapid destratification, but they also suggest that no drug-use assemblage can lead to anything besides this empty BwO. In other words, they bestow upon the drug assemblage a pre-determined affect.

One of the problems with a drug assemblage, according to Deleuze and Guattari, lies in its potential for habit: that gradual sedimentation and rigidification of organs and bodies and movements which it engenders. They suggest that the line of flight ‘of drugs is constantly being segmentarised under the most rigid of forms, that of dependency, the hit and the dose, the dealer’ (1987: 284). This is certainly one of the dangers of a drug assemblage. Yet not all drug use is bound up with habit. Surely there is a possible sporadic use of cigarettes in which no particular assemblage – not the ‘beer cigarette’, the ‘work-break cigarette’, or the ‘morning cigarette’ – is allowed to become sedimented. A style of use in which each cigarette is enjoyed in its singularity and difference, and from which the body moves on to new and other assemblages before any stratification occurs: before the tar can become permanently lodged. And why could there not be a similar use of ecstasy or speed, or even heroin? How can the hypothetical body which spent a night in an acid-trip assemblage once in ‘97 be said to have habituated? Or the one which has injected heroin twice: once in
the arm five years ago in a friend’s apartment, and once in the foot at a party in Berlin?

Deleuze and Guattari, however, argue that even if a drug assemblage were to somehow manage to escape habit and segmentation, it would still only ever be able to launch false and artificial lines of flight: becomings that imitate, rather than reach, new planes of consistency. They write:

> Even in its supple form, [drug use] can mobilise gradients and thresholds of perception toward becomings-animal, becomings-molecular, but even this is done in the context of a relativity of thresholds that restrict themselves to imitating a plane of consistency rather than drawing it on an absolute threshold (1987: 284).

It seems that, for Deleuze and Guattari, it is ultimately the drugs themselves – their particular mode of composition, the ‘artificial’ nature of their ‘chemical’ structure (1987: 285) – that renders impossible true lines of flight. The only lines the they believe the drug-assemblage to draw out are those of a downward spiral: a spiral toward a botched BwO in which no desire can flow:

> Instead of holes in the world allowing the world lines themselves to run off, the lines of flight coil and start to swirl in black holes; to each addict a hole, group or individual, like a snail. Down instead of high. The molecular microperceptions are overlaid in advance, depending on the drug, by hallucinations, delusions, false perceptions, phantasies, or paranoid outbursts… Instead of making a body without organs sufficiently rich or full for the passage of intensities… the causal line, creative line, or line of flight immediately turns into a line of death and abolition… Black holes and lines of death (1987: 285).

This bleak image of drug use suggests that any positive lines an injecting drug-using body experiences will always be overridden by lines of death, regardless of the other components of its assemblage. Regardless, for instance, of the territorialising force of the social machines, the desiring force of the body itself, or the chaotic force of chance. Given Deleuze and Guattari’s open disdain for both determinism and essentialism, along with Deleuze’s suggestion (with Parnet) that any movement of deterritorialisation must only be studied in ‘concrete social fields’ and ‘in specific moments’ (Deleuze and Parnet 2002: 135), I find this particular aspect of their thought problematic. And while Deleuze and Guattari do propose one way of accessing the positive desiring lines of drug use without plunging toward a black hole,
even this is only by skipping the substance itself; by jumping in at the middle of the becoming and moving straight to the line of flight:

getting drunk, but on pure water… getting high, but by abstention… so that nonusers can succeed in passing through the holes in the world and following lines of flight at the very place where means other than drugs become necessary (1987: 286).

Deleuze and Guattari thereby continue their strange distinction between one line of flight and another identical line of flight, according to the ‘nature’ or ‘truth’ of the substance used to launch it. But how can there really be an internal difference between a drug experience with drugs and a hypothetically identical drug experience without them? Surely the three key potential dangers in the drug assemblage – the possibility of habit-sameness rigidification; abject reterritorialisation; or the void of total destratification – are all problems which could similarly occur along a drugged line of flight without drugs. Yet Deleuze and Guattari appear to have underestimated this possibility, treating such problems as inseparable from the drug itself.

This distinction has also been also recently criticised by Dale, who calls Deleuze and Guattari the ‘ultimate clichéd junkies’ (2002: 96) for idealising the notion of a pure line of flight without drugs. She points out that while ‘economies of drugs, pain and madness do not operate entirely as the effect of the substances or movements they take on’ (96), Deleuze and Guattari seem to ignore the fact that the drug assemblage generally contains more than just the substance and its particular effect. In focusing on the physical effect of the drug-substance, they seem to forget about, or dismiss, the other components of the assemblage, such as: its aesthetics (including imagery, smells, sounds, feel); its spatial arrangements and context; its timing or history; and its specific lines of stratification (social discourses and institutions, identity and selfhood, politics and expressivity27). As Klein notes with reference to cigarettes:

As with all drugs, one ought to resist the sort of intolerance that morally reduces these substances to their active chemical ingredients… cigarettes in particular, cannot be judged solely on the basis of the effects of nicotine and tars (1993: 191).

The aesthetics of drugs, and ‘the specific forms of beauty they foster’ (Klein 1993: xi), are an aspect of the assemblage that renders drugs irreducible to their physical effect. These aesthetics are intertextually coded in film, poetry, music, photography and everyday life (1993). The joyous charm of raised glasses for a champagne toast; the elegance of a cigarette poised at the end of a long holder in the hand of Audrey Hepburn; the sophisticated appeal of smoke curling around the face of Humphrey Bogart in *Casablanca*; the horrific mesmerising beauty of the pale unfurled arm releasing a pulse of blood into a heroin-filled syringe in *Trainspotting*. Visual artistry. The sound of a beer bottle opening, the smell of coffee being ground, the taste of a trip beneath the tongue, the feel of the needle piercing the flesh. Sensual artistry.

The affects of a drug assemblage transform the body and its relations in far more ways than simply chemical. They can change the way a body composes itself or puts itself together. As Klein notes, for example:

> the witty, touching, beautiful language of cigarettes is linked to the way they organise the woman’s pose, the “air” she assumes… the language that her body speaks in the process of arranging itself, holding itself, in relation to the point of fire at the end of the cigarette (9).

Drug use assemblages can also bring people together: to borrow a lighter; to share a drink; to inject speed together; or to pass around a joint. They can take a body outside its existing spatial context: to the steps outside a party to have a smoke; to the pub to buy a beer; or to a busy shopping strip to score some heroin. They can induce capitalist flows and consumer spending: as when a perfume is called ‘Opium’ or ‘Addict’; when a fashion industry appeals to the ‘heroin-chic look’; or when ecstasy logos appear on t-shirts. In tying all drug assemblages to their potential for empty lines of flight, Deleuze and Guattari overlook these diverse – and often productive – elements and instead bind the fate of all drug-using bodies to the essence or ‘truth’ of the substances they ingest.

But how is such a determination of truth or essence to ever be made? There are so many forms that drugs can take and so many substances that can be said to be drugs: alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, prescription medicines, even food – for food is, after all, composed of various organic and chemical substances which are incorporated into the
body and which alter the way that body interacts with itself and with the world (Probyn 2000). And there are so many machinic assemblages – advertising, film, media, television, fashion, education, government policy – in which drugs (in discourse, imagery, thought, and so on) are present. Assemblages that we form part of nearly every day. How can we say with any certainty which drug assemblages are false and which are true? Which are artificial and which are natural? Or, more importantly, which will allow a positive line of flight to be taken, and which will lead to abject territorialisations or to lines of death?

I suggest that we can’t. The only way to distinguish between different drug assemblages is by exploring them at the level of the surface: by looking at the affects each assemblage produces, the movements it makes, and the specific stratifications it produces. Not by looking at the particular substances a body connects with and judging in advance the direction it will take, but by taking each assemblage as an event and mapping its specific ethics, aesthetics, spatiality and forms of subjectification.

**An Ethico-Aesthetics of the Drug-Using Body**

Deleuze and Guattari’s bleak conceptualisation of the drugged body, as an empty line of flight, is based on a very specific style of drug use: a style of use which either becomes habitualised or which destroys a body’s productive capacities (death, sickness, total alienation). Taken alone as a device for rethinking injecting drug use, it is therefore severely limited. For although the drugged body is a useful way of illustrating the limits of destratification, it is important to acknowledge that in using the drugged body to illustrate a black-hole, there is likely to be a simultaneous becoming-black-hole of the drug-using body. The ethico-aesthetic implications of this should not be taken lightly.

Yet the work of Deleuze and Guattari is not meant to add up to a system of belief (all or nothing), but rather a pragmatic collection of concepts that can be picked up and put down according to the specific task at hand (Massumi 1992: 8). Although the conceptualisation of drug use explicitly mobilised by Deleuze and Guattari is not a very helpful tool for developing an ethico-aesthetics of injecting drug use, many of
their other concepts are. Their ideas of stratification and becoming, for example, help to draw attention to the problems, limitations and negative implications of identity categories such as the addict or drug user. Their reformulation of desire assists in moving beyond pathologising accounts of drug use, and toward an understanding of drug use as an everyday desiring-machine that, like any other desiring-machine, can be revolutionary or can turn bad. And their idea of the body as an assemblage – which can only be evaluated in terms of the connections it makes and the affects it composes – helps in moving away from judging drugs and drug using bodies prior to their encounter.

In the rest of this thesis I will explore some of the ways in which a range of other Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts – including those of: ‘smooth and striated space’, the ‘fold’, ‘determinantalisation’, the ‘refrain’, and ‘nomadology’, along with their particular conceptions of capitalism and art – might provide more useful philosophical machinery for rethinking injecting drug-using bodies and their relationships to the physical, social, political and economic world around them. In the chapter which follows, I explore the specific relationship between injecting drug user bodies and urban space. I examine the ways in which Deleuze and Guattari’s ethico-aesthetic framework might aid in moving beyond traditional Cartesian approaches to space and thus thinking through spaces of illicit drug use in new and more productive ways.
3
Spatial Folds

The outside is not a fixed limit but a moving matter animated by peristaltic movements, folds and foldings that together make up an inside (Deleuze 1988b: 96-97).

In 2001, on my way in to work, I came across a young woman lying on the pavement. As I approached from the other side of the road it was impossible to tell if she was asleep or dead. From her location and appearance, I guessed she was most likely drunk or doped out on heroin. But with no bottle or syringes lying around it was difficult to tell. Having spent the previous two years working part-time at the local outreach needle and syringe program, I knew the importance of checking for overdose: checking, that is, to make sure some mixture of heroin and other drugs was not hindering her breathing. I also knew that few others would be likely to stop and check. Sure enough, it was about 8:30 in the morning and scores of people were continuing past her on their way to work. Some stared as they waited to cross the road. Most didn’t even look down.

It turned out that she was ok. Although she seemed to be affected by alcohol or drugs, she was breathing and was able to speak. Thanking me for checking on her, she closed her eyes and went back to sleep.

Despite having grown fairly accustomed to the indifference of passers-by to those who are overdosing on drugs and alcohol, or who are sleeping out on the streets, I was still profoundly struck by the fact that so many people had walked past this young woman. That so many people could continue past someone who could have been unconscious or dying, without stopping to see if they were ok. That perhaps I too, had I not been previously working in an outreach capacity, might have continued past. What is it about such an urban encounter that seems to disconnect people from one another? That seems to make it possible for people to keep walking. What is it about a body – marked as a drug user or alcoholic, either by their appearance or spatial location – that produces such a rift? And what are the implications of this for those who inject drugs in public spaces?
Around the time of my encounter, injecting drug use in Melbourne’s CBD had become a very visible public activity. Marketing, buying and injecting of heroin were all taking place on the city’s streets and lanes. Deals were often done on busy shopping streets, or in nearby computer arcades, laneways or carparks. And with purchasers often reluctant to waste much time or travel far before using the drug, injecting was also often taking place in nearby public and semi-public spaces such as laneways, alcoves, parks, toilets and carparks.

There is no doubt that this drug market was making itself felt in the city. In the main dealing area, a large city block bordered by Russell, Bourke, Swanston and Little Bourke Streets, cryptic calls of ‘Are you chasin’?’ reverberated amongst surreptitious winks, nods and ‘handshakes’. Unwell, increasingly desperate-looking people trying to get a ‘spare dollar’ from passers-by, mingled amongst those whose droopy, half-asleep and contented demeanor suggested they had already managed to ‘score’ and inject. In laneways, alcoves and toilets, used syringes, swabs, spoons and other injecting waste sat amongst urine and occasional piles of vomit and faeces. In the media, images of discarded syringes, dealers with their faces obscured and needles piercing skin appeared alongside reports of the rising overdose ‘toll’. Below headlines such as ‘City No-Go Areas’, were maps of the city’s ‘heroin zones’ marked in blood-red. By early 2001, certain areas of the city had come to be imagined, and experienced, as inextricably tied to illicit injecting drug use (Fitzgerald and Threadgold 2004: 414).

28 Since around 2001, when availability of heroin dropped substantially, and a concerted effort was made by the City of Melbourne and the police to ‘tidy up’ the CBD’s main drug market precincts, the public drug market in the CBD has dropped away substantially. Although the market across broader Melbourne as a whole has also diminished, there are still some areas, such as the nearby inner-city suburb of Richmond, where public drug purchasing and consumption remain high.

29 Although amphetamines are also a commonly injected drug in Melbourne, heroin remains the drug most commonly injected in public spaces (one reason for this is that the strong physical withdrawal often associated with regular heroin use tends to encourage consumption as quickly as possible after purchasing).

30 As in: ‘are you chasing some heroin to purchase?’. Around this time the question ‘Are you chasin’?’ – often interpreted by unsuspecting passers-by as ‘Are you Jason?’ – had become so ubiquitous in the Bourke Street/Russell Street precinct that people had begun selling and wearing joke t-shirts with large text printed on the front reading ‘I’m not Jason’.

The ways in which these spaces are imagined, experienced and treated by the broader community, undoubtedly impacts on the ways in which they are experienced by those who are injecting within them. The means by which injecting drug using bodies negotiate and experience health-related risks in public spaces – including overdose, blood-borne viruses, bacterial infections, vein damage and violence – are surely mediated by the socio-spatial contexts in which injecting takes place (Malins et al 2006). Several theorists in the field of drug use studies have, however, already drawn attention to these issues, and have begun to explore the role of spatial context in shaping risk mediation, social identity, and social relations (see for example: Dovey et al 2001; Duff 2007; Fischer et al 2004; Fitzgerald et al 2000; Fitzgeral and et al 2004; Fraser 2006; Maher and Dixon 1999; Malins et al 2006). Yet despite these theoretical developments, most harm minimisation initiatives continue to ignore the role of space, focusing on the provision of equipment and education without detailed consideration of the ways in which spatial context might impact upon the uptake and use of sterile injecting equipment, or the implementation of knowledges regarding safer practices. Most also fail to adequately consider the relationships between harm minimisation practices, spatial contexts and the capacities of bodies to connect to one another in urban space in more positive ways.

In this chapter I take up Deleuze and Guattari’s writings on space to explore the relationships between drug-using bodies, social relations and urban sites of injecting. Building on the idea of the injecting body developed in Chapter 2, and drawing on interview discussions with eleven women who were regularly injecting in Melbourne’s Central Business District (CBD) during 2004, I explore the various ways in which urban spaces shape the mediation of drug-related risks and, more broadly, affect social relations and bodily potentials.

The Relation Between Bodies and Spaces

We are not in the world, we become with the world (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 169, emphasis added).

Since the Enlightenment, space has for the most part been treated as an inert void: a pre-existing container within which action and social interaction simply take place.

See appendix 1 for details regarding the interview methodology.
Although this ‘Euclidean-Cartesian-Newtonian’ (Lefebvre 1986: 206) conception of space still forms the basis of most empirical sciences, as well as the majority of day-to-day discourses and practices, it has by now been extensively critiqued.

One of the first to thoroughly problematise modernist conceptions of space was Lefebvre (1974), who showed how space is not simply composed of physical dimensions, but is produced – and given meaning – through social practice, imagination and representation. Since then, a wide range of social theorists have examined the ways in which space impacts upon, and is impacted on by, social practices and social relations. At the forefront of these critiques have been feminist geographers, who have long challenged ‘the underlying assumptions of rationalist and modernist city and building design’ (Boys 1998: 203). While early feminist spatial theorists tended to focus on the ways in which urban space – as a predominantly masculinist creation and sphere – operates to oppress women, limiting their movements, postures and social-spatial relations (203-4), contemporary scholars have drawn attention to the ways in which women also actively resist spatial constraints and through this construct themselves, and urban space, differently (see for example: Ainley 1998; Bondi and Rose 2003; Boys 1998; Valentine 1989). Space thus becomes something which both enables and restricts; or conversely, as Ainley puts it, gender becomes ‘how we do space’ as well as ‘how space does us’ (1998: xvi).

These ideas have been drawn upon in studies of various gendered minoritarian spatial practices – such as sex work (see for example: Hubbard 1998; Hubbard and Sanders 2003; Quadara 2006), drug dealing (see for example: Denton 2001) and drug use (see for example: Malins 2000; Malins et al 2006). Hubbard has shown, for example, how sex work impacts upon particular spaces to produce them as morally-spoiled ‘red-light districts’ and in turn, those spaces impact upon the women who traverse or work within them, rendering their identities spoiled. He writes: ‘by being “placed” in areas associated with criminality, disease and vulgarity, commercial sex work comes to take on those characteristics in the social imagination’ (1998: 71). Similarly, in an earlier study, I have shown some of the ways in which the spaces in which women inject drugs are produced through social discourse, personal narrative and practices of resistance, and in turn how those spaces come to shape the identities of the women who inject within them (Malins 2000; see also Malins et al 2006).
But is the relationship between bodies and spaces simply discursive? And does it operate only at the level of identity? Poststructural gender theorists have more recently begun to problematise the modernist binaries – such as those of man/woman, body/space, mind/body, discourse corporeality, identity/body, and space/time – which tend to implicitly persist within earlier studies (see for example: Braidotti 1994, 2003; Budgeon 2003; Colebrook 1999; Grosz 1994a, 1995; Lorraine 2005; Olkowski 1999, 2000; Probyn 1990). In doing so, they have not only produced a far more complex conception of gender – as a fluid continuum or rhizomatic multiplicity – but also a far more sophisticated conception of the relationships between bodies and spaces. Rather than see bodies and spaces as autonomous, pre-existing entities which impact upon one another, such theorists have suggested they be conceptualised as always already co-mingling and co-producing (Barad 2003: 106; Grosz 1995: 104). In this conception, spaces and bodies do not simply discursively produce one another, but are ontologically and materially inter-twined, such that the flux or becoming of one cannot be thought of or studied in isolation from the movement or potentiality of the other. For Barad, this means that the relation between bodies and spaces must be conceptualised as an ‘intra-action’ rather than an interaction. It also means that bodies can never be said to act with full agency, and that spaces can never be said to act deterministically upon bodies.

Although these ideas have been relatively slow to make an impact in the field of drug studies, several theorists have in recent years developed useful new connections between spaces, bodies and drug consumption risks and pleasures. Fraser (2006), for example, has drawn on Barad’s idea of ‘intra-activity’, along with Bakhtin’s concept of the ‘chronotope’, to develop a complex understanding of the ways in which particular arrangements of time, space and bodies come together to produce particular types of bodies and particular assemblages of risk within in a methadone treatment dosing queue. She shows, for example, how the temporal and spatial arrangements of the methadone dosing point, ‘co-produce each other’ (192) and in doing so materialise ‘particular methadone subjects… [such as] the “unproductive”, the “disorderly”, the “illicit”’ (193). She also shows how the time and space chronotope of the queue is itself always already affected by the actions of the bodies within it (193). For Fraser,
none of the elements of the queue can be studied in isolation without losing the
dynamism of the assemblage which is always already co-producing its affects.

In another study, Fitzgerald and Threadgold (2004) have argued that much of the
public fear that arises from encounters with street drug use can be understood in terms
of the capacity of public drug use to render perceptible the permeable boundaries
between bodies and city space and between different bodies, drug using and
otherwise. By forcing us to sense and acknowledge this ontological blurring between
space and bodies, time and space, and self and other, drug use produces a moment of
fear (see also: Lupton 1999: 3, 126-7, 133-6). Fitzgerald and Threadgold write: ‘part
of this fear is that we experience ourselves as connected intimately to the matter
energy of the world and we no longer can think of ourselves as sovereign individuals
with our own subjectivity, identity and body’ (2004: 411). When we can no longer
maintain the illusion of a bounded, autonomous body and a rational streamlined city,
we can no longer clearly separate ourselves from the spaces that we come in contact
with and the bodies that permeate those spaces. The city thus becomes scary because
it is seen to be part of us.

This idea of the city-becoming-body for injecting drug users has also been explored in
terms of Deleuze’s concept of the fold (Malins et al 2006). In this co-authored paper,
we argued that women who are injecting drugs in Melbourne’s CBD, discursively and
materially enfold and unfold the spaces they encounter. These spaces impact upon not
only their identities but their bodily potential: that is, what it is that a body can do. At
the same time, through language and bodily movement through space, women
performatively construct not only their identities, but also the very spaces that
surround them. These gendered folds and unfoldings have important implications for
risk and harm in an urban environment.

In order to develop a more detailed conceptualisation of these kinds of folded
relationships between city spaces and IDU bodily capacities. I am now going to
outline in greater details some of the spatial concepts emerging from Deleuze and
Guattari’s work. Drawing on concepts including intensities and the virtual, the smooth
the striated and the holey, and the fold, I will examine how we might begin to think
the complex relations between urban space and gendered injecting in new ways.
Space as Intensive and Virtual

Deleuze’s cartography is one that draws maps of inflexions that are seen and felt as intensities (Conley 1998: 134).

For Deleuze and Guattari, space is understood as being both extensive and intensive (De Landa 2005: 80–88). That is, it is composed not only of physical, measurable dimensions and distances (lengths, widths, heights), but also of intensive forces (such as duration, temperature, colour, sound, texture, smell, desire and so on). Thinking of space as intensive, as a ‘field of force[s]’ (Wise 2000: 297), adds movement to space and prevents it being thought of as either a static container, or as containing a consistent social meaning. As Wise writes:

Space is marked and shaped… with objects forming borders, walls and fences… The marker (wall, road, line, border, post, sign) is static, dull and cold. But when lived (encountered, manipulated, touched, voiced, glanced at, practiced) it radiates a milieu, a field of force… Space is in continual motion, composed of vectors, speeds (297).

Thinking of space as purely extensive can sometimes be useful, but it necessarily means ignoring the very real movements and qualitative forces which shape space and which affect bodies which move through it. As Grosz explains, ‘We cannot help but view the world in terms of solids, as things. But [in doing so] we leave behind something untapped of the fluidity of the world, the movements, vibrations, transformations’ (2001: 175). These intensive movements and vibrations are not always perceptible (175; Massumi 2002: 10). While some forces – such as those of temperature, colour or wind – are to at least some level discernable, others exist outside the threshold of perception; moving or vibrating at a ‘different rhythm from most perceptible movements’ (Massumi 2002: 10). Nonetheless, as bodies move through fields of intensive variation, these variations are ‘felt’ by the body, even if they are not registered in consciousness (15).

Lingis (1998) refers to the compositions of these intensive variations, and the ways in which they are ‘felt’ the body, as ‘levels’. He writes:

A level is neither a purely intelligible order, nor a positive form given to a pure a priori intuition; it is a sensory phenomenon… it is that
with which or according to which we perceive… The particulars we see, hear, touch, smell, and taste are salients, contours, contrasts, inceptions and terminations that take form on the levels (26-27).

The particular intensities of light or heat or colour in which we are immersed, for example, impact upon the ways in which we perceive other variations of light or heat or colour. Moreover, various types of levels interact with one another; a particular level of heat will affect the way in which we can perceive other sensory information such as colour or sound or light. Lingis writes:

The levels are sensory data… [t]hey do not simply extend into the space and time of a sensorial field; they extend that field. the odorous and olfactory are not so many discrete events that make an impact on our sensory surfaces; the smell and taste open upon an odorous medium and a savorous medium and adjust to the level in which in the pungent night our sense of smell can find the perfume of a woman and our taste discern the tang of spring water (26).

Levels are relational; they only make sense in relation to other levels and in relation to a general milieu of levels. They are, as Lingis notes, ‘not intrinsic properties of things, bodies, spaces… but relational – their affect depends upon its contrast and resonance with that which surrounds it’ (27-8). Levels are also vibratory and rhythmic; they develop relational patterns of resonance and discordance.

The various rhythmic levels a body encounters in space are productive; they necessarily catalyse a change in being of some sort (De Landa 2005: 81). Spatial intensities affect a body’s movements, perceptions and capacities to affect and be affected. In relation to spatial rhythms, bodies themselves tend to develop particular rhythms and patterns of movement and behaviour:

As subjects we are caught up in the becoming of that rhythm, the rhythm created by the coming together of the pulses of territories and milieus. But we do not mimic the rhythm, repeat it note for note, pulse for pulse, the exact product of our surroundings and material environments (over-determination), because at the heart of repetition is difference… a little chaos in the interstices of order (Wise 2000: 304).

For Deleuze and Guattari, the force which lends spatial intensities their capacity for difference and chaos, is that of the virtual. Here, the concept of the virtual has nothing to do with the idea of alternate or simulated realities (as in virtual reality), nor with
abstract or imaginary worlds. Rather, the virtual is a very real, intensive potentiality that inheres in any assemblage. It is a real, but not yet actualised potential which presses upon the assemblage, giving it a future-oriented qualitative depth.

De Landa’s (2005) physics-based explanation of the virtual’s reality is useful here. As De Landa notes, when two intensive differences (two temperatures, pressures, chemical forces, colours, and so on) come into contact as ‘attractors’ they tend toward some sort of final state of equilibrium (83). This state of equilibrium can be said to exist in potentia prior to its actualisation; it is very real, but not yet actual. It is a kind of pulling or tendency, a force towards. It necessitates a concept of the body, as well as of space, as always already in movement, that is, always already becoming. The force of this movement – its tendency – is very real, although not yet actualised. As Massumi suggests: ‘To think the body [or space] in movement thus means accepting the paradox that there is an incorporeal dimension of the body [or space]. Of it, but not it. Real, material, but incorporeal’ (2002: 5, text in parentheses added).

Virtual potentiality – as a real, tending, pending event – can therefore be understood as quite distinct from the notion of possibility. Where possibility refers to a cognitive estimation of what sorts of actualisations might predictably occur given particular conditions, potentiality does not rely on cognitive thought or reason; it possesses a kind of will or tendency of its own. As De Landa explains:

given a system in which an intensive difference exists, the final state of equilibrium to which the system tends is somehow already present prior to its actualisation... but what ontological state does that final state have prior to its coming into actual existence? One may think that the category of “the possible” is the ontological category... but this would be wrong... possibilities are not mind-independent entities... States acting as “attractors”, on the other hand, possess a certain objective efficacy even while not being fully actual, since they guide real processes toward a definite outcome prior to the latter’s actualisation (2005: 83).

Possibility has a much smaller scope than potential and is limited to those outcomes and variations which are predictable and foreseeable. It is, as Massumi notes, ‘a restricted range of potential: what the thing can become without ceasing to be itself’ (1992: 38). Potential, by contrast, is much more open and includes all those variations and lines of becoming that are yet to be thought. By necessity, it tends toward the
new, the different, the unpredictable. For while the force of the virtual is indeed very real – an active potential rather than a mere possibility – one can never be sure in advance where it will end up. Its actualisation is always a process of differentiation, which brings into play forces of chaos and chance; it ‘comes about through differentiation, through divergent lines, and creates so many differences in kind by virtue of its own movement’ (Deleuze 1988c: 43). Thus while we may indeed be able to discern the tendency of an assemblage of intensive differences, we cannot be certain of exactly what will result. What we can be sure of, however, is that something different will emerge.

The virtual can therefore also be thought of as the capacity of any assemblage (spatial, temporal, bodily) to affect or be affected. As Massumi explains:

“there’s like a population or swarm of potential ways of affecting or being affected that follows along as we move through life… we always have a vague sense that they’re there… [yet] that vague sense of potential… it isn’t actually there, only virtually (2003: 213-4).”

It is a potential which is immanent to a body, and always already shapes its present-future relations. It is, as Massumi suggests, ‘the immanence of a thing to its still indeterminate variation, under way’ (2002: 9). The virtual is, in this sense, a vitality. It is that which enables things to break out of lines of habit or stratification, and move along new, creative trajectories. Having more potentials available intensifies our life: ‘our degree of freedom at any one time corresponds to how much of our experimental ‘depth’ we can access towards a next step – how intensely we are living and moving’ (Massumi 2003: 214).

But how does the virtual – as an intensive potentiality – extend itself through space, and through space impact upon the body? How can we, in other words, extensively map intensive potentials and their corporeal affects? Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts of smooth and striated space provide a useful means of thinking through the ways in which various spaces come to extensively enable – and constrain – intensive potentialities. Deleuze’s concept of the fold then offers a way of building on the smooth and striated to develop a more complex understanding of the material relationship between these spatial intensities and the production of bodies in space.
The Smooth, the Striated and the Holey

In a smooth space-time one occupies without counting, whereas in a striated space-time one counts in order to occupy (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 477).

Deleuze and Guattari think of the relation between intensive and extensive space in terms of smoothings and striations. Striated spaces are those which are defined – or experienced – more in terms of their extensive dimensions, rather than their intensive forces. Striated spaces are, for example, those which tend to be clearly delineated and arranged; measured and countered; ordered and structured; gridded and sedentary. They are spaces in which movement is limited to pre-determined possibilities; beginnings and ends; states of being: ‘in striated space, lines or trajectories tend to be subordinated to points: one goes from on point to another’ (1987: 478).

Smooth spaces, by contrast, are those populated by intensive forces, movements, and trajectories, rather than by counting and measurement. Smooth space, Deleuze and Guattari write:

is directional rather than dimensional or metric… filled by events or hæcceities, far more than by formed and perceived things… a space of affects, more than one of properties… haptic\footnote{As Deleuze and Guattari suggest, ““Haptic” is a better word than “tactile” since it does not establish an opposition between two sense organs but rather invites the assumption that the eye itself may fulfill this nonoptical function (1987: 492).} rather than optical… occupied by intensities… sonorous and tactile qualities (1987: 479).

In smooth space, movement is not limited or pre-determined by structures or categories, but is instead open to creative lines of flight in any direction. Smooth space ‘is in principal infinite, open, and unlimited in every direction; it has neither top nor bottom nor centre; it does not assign fixed and mobile elements but rather distributes a continuous variation’ (1987: 475-6).

Distinguishing between the two types of space, Deleuze and Guattari give examples not only from geography – with the sea and the dessert exemplifying ‘smooth’ space and the city a ‘striated space par excellence’ (1987: 481) – but also from textiles, music, mathematics, physics, labour and art. Felt, patchwork and crochet, for
example, provide good models of infinitely rhizomatic smooth space with no beginnings and ends, no binaries, lines or order; while cross-weave fabrics and knitting – with their horizontal and vertical elements, their clear front and back – provide good models of the striated (475-7). Modern wage-labour – with its rigid organisation of space, time, movement and desire – provides an example of striated space; while contemporary globalised forms of labour and capital provide archetypes of the smooth (490-2). And in art, the striated organisational and representational nature of much portraiture and landscape painting can be contrasted with the smooth, close-range, destratified and disordered chaos of abstract expressionism.

Yet despite these distinctions, it is important to note that the smooth and striated are not mutually exclusive at all but are always found ‘in mixture’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 474). No space is ever entirely smooth, no space completely striated. The smooth and the striated are thus best be understood as tendencies or trajectorities, rather than fixed states. Indeed, each type of space can at any time spring from the other. The smooth space of the sea, for example, is constantly being striated by maritime measurements and bearings, by longitudes and latitudes, and by national borders and policies (479). And from the striated spaces of the city, smooth spaces are constantly emerging: ‘sprawling, temporary shifting shantytowns of nomads and cave-dwellers, scrap metal and fabric, patchwork, to which the striations of money, work or housing are no longer even relevant’ (481). As Deleuze and Guattari suggest: ‘smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space’ (474).

It is also important to acknowledge that the smooth and striated cannot be simply aligned with the good and the bad. While all striations are necessarily limiting – of movement and change – not all are bad. Many, in fact, are necessary in order for smooth becomings and transformations to be able to emerge at all. Without some order, without some rules and structure, lines of becoming would most likely turn to lines of pure chaos – lines oblivion and death: the limit point of the BwO. As Deleuze and Guattari note: ‘smooth spaces are not in themselves liberatory. But the struggle is changed or displaced in them, and life reconstitutes its stakes, confronts new obstacles… Never believe that a smooth space will suffice to save us’ (1987: 500). An ethico-aesthetics of space involves not so much a matter of getting rid of all striations,
but of paying attention to the kinds of forces at work and the ways in which they affect bodies. Deleuze and Guattari write:

What interests us in operations of striation and smoothing are precisely the passages or combinations: how the forces at work within space continually striate it, and how in the course of its striation it develops other forces and emits new smooth spaces (500).

In addition to the smooth and the striated, Deleuze and Guattari therefore develop the idea of ‘holey space’ (1987: 500), which operates as a kind of in-between linkage space. The creation of holey space, Deleuze and Guattari explain, involves ‘passing through both the striated land of sedentary space and the nomadic ground of smooth space without stopping at either one’ (414). Holey space thus joins the smooth and striated; it enables a movement that is not quite fully smooth but neither is it blocked. As Frichot suggests: ‘Holey space is not as absolute as smooth space, and offers instead the possibility of temporary respite’ (2007: 175). It facilitates, in other words, a mobility which must necessarily be cautious and strategic, but which can nonetheless constitute pockets of resistance and escape.

I will now turn to the specific terrain of Melbourne’s CBD in order to examine the ways in which smooth, striated spaces can be understood to impact upon public injecting drug use, and – more importantly – the possibilities that holey space might offer for an ethico-aesthetics of urban space.

**Smoothings and Striations in Melbourne’s CBD**

In contrast to a city such as Amsterdam – a ‘city entirely without roots, a rhizome-city with its stem-canals’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 15), Melbourne’s CBD seems at first glance to indeed be an exemplar of striated space. Its famous grid-patterned streets, with their tram lines and narrow footpaths, give the city a strongly linear quality, and limit the kinds of movements and relations between people that are possible. Traffic lights, pedestrian crossings and tram stops also shape movement and social relations in very material ways, as do more basic fixtures such as fences, gates and buildings. Melbourne is also striated subterraneously – by sewers, storm-water

---

34 See also Jay’s (1993: 126) discussion of the haptic, textured, un-gridded nature of Amsterdam’s urban spaces.
drains, telephone and power cables and underground train lines – and above: by the
tall grey skyscrapers and office blocks which dominate Melbourne’s skyline.

In addition to these very physical, structural striations, Melbourne is also striated
socially, or by the socius. These striations are often imperceptible and include not
only the force of the state apparatus, but also that of dominant social relations:
discourses, knowledges, and governed ways of being. Almost every inch of the CBD,
for example, is under formal surveillance of some sort: via a loosely connected
network of closed circuit cameras, police patrols, private security guards and local
government ‘compliance officers’. The many businesses which populate the city, such
as its restaurants, cafés, fast-food outlets, convenience stores, clothing shops, retail
outlets and department stores, also strate the city by regulating which bodies can, and
cannot, enter their premises. City space is also striated along the lines of gender, with
historically embedded norms regarding women’s presence, appearance and
movements in public urban space still impacting upon women’s use of the city today
(Brown-May 1998).

Yet Melbourne’s CBD is also a space which is teeming with smooth lines of
possibility, rupture and escape. Its tall buildings and narrow lanes offer smooth,
shadowy spaces of escape, where it is possible to elude surveillance and control. The
high density and diversity of activities and people moving through the CBD, increases
the potential for chaotic, unsettling and deterritorialising encounters. And its socio-
geographic centrality makes it a likely incubator for individual and collective
movements of political, economic and gendered resistance. Meticulously regulated,
yet ultimately uncontrollable and chaotic, cities (such as Melbourne) tend – more so
than perhaps anywhere else – to bring to life the tensions and inter-dependencies
between the smooth and striated. As Deleuze and Guattari note:

the city is the force of striation that reimparts smooth space, puts it
back into operations everywhere… outside but also inside itself… a
counterattack combining the smooth and the holey and turning back
against the town: sprawling, temporary, shifting shantytowns of
nomads and cave dwellers, scrap metal and fabric, patchwork, to
which the striations of money, work or housing are no longer even
Jay-walking, shoplifting, littering, homelessness, begging, skateboarding, graffiti-writing, sex-work and drug use: all constitute examples of chaos and rupture which emerge from within the striations of Melbourne’s urban environment; all forge smooth spaces which elude control.

Cities therefore provide one of the most extreme examples of the interface between smooth and striated space: between order and disorder; between the forces of the state and those of the ‘nomads’ who bend and break the rules, who live outside dominant ways of being, who seek out and create smooth space. These smooth spaces are like the city’s life-flow, they are what makes it such an exciting and desirable destination. Such flows undoubtedly play a role in luring so many visitors to Melbourne each day, and in drawing in such a large resident population. Yet such spaces also produce fear: fear of the unknown, the hidden, the unexpected; fear of things changing; fear of chaos. There exists, therefore, a constant tension in the city between the celebration of chaotic smooth sites of rupture, and the maintenance of order thought to be necessary for social amenity. In response, spaces are increasingly being created to provide ‘controlled’ flows of desire: spaces, for example, where people can produce and consume street art and graffiti without disrupting commercial and private property interests; or spaces where visitors can feel as though they are able to move and meet freely, but which are in fact privately managed and monitored commercial spaces.

---

35 The City of Melbourne’s management of street art provides a good case in point. Recognising the increasing popularity and marketability of its unauthorised street graffiti and stencil art, the City has in recent years moved away from its previous zero-tolerance approach and towards a balanced, more tolerant approach in particular areas (see: City of Melbourne 2005). They have introduced, for example, a policy of requiring all graffiti to be removed, and has instead introduced a permit process which enables property owners in certain parts of the city to apply to keep certain works of street art that appear on their buildings, with all other works to be immediately removed (see: City of Melbourne 2006). As a result of this policy there are now several laneways in Melbourne (places where residents have been active and successful in applying for street art permits) covered in stencil and graffiti artworks, while elsewhere in the city all graffiti and stencil art has been tenaciously removed. While this is certainly an improvement on previous approaches, it brings with it certain problems. Instead of enhancing smooth urban flows, this new approach tends to produce new urban striations, producing highly regulated, well-known, heavily photographed street-art destinations on the one hand, and an orderly absence of street art on the other. These striations limit the ways in which people in the city might encounter street art and the ways in which they might, through these encounters, be transformed (see Malins 2009 forthcoming).

36 Many of Melbourne’s new shopping centres, for example, are composed of open-air ‘laneways’, with no clear entry/exit points, and no visible cameras or guards. In this way they create an appearance of smooth space which obscures the striations – the strict rules of bodily conduct, hidden cameras and security guards – that continue to govern movement and social relations. Many ‘public’ city spaces are also being designed to appear smooth, while actually being designed and managed in ways which
The increasing striation and gentrification of Melbourne is not entirely negative, however. The removal of rubbish and grime, improvements in lighting, and the installation of syringe disposal bins, for example, all have important implications for the healthy use of city space. Without some striations, the city would become chaotic and uninhabitable. But it is also important to be aware of the limiting affects that a city’s striations and regulations can have on its bodies, particularly its marginalised and minoritarian bodies, who include the homeless, the poor, the Indigenous, those who are considered physically or intellectually disabled, the mentally ill, young skate-boarders, beggars, buskers and those who use drugs.

Women who inject drugs in city space are an exceptionally marginalised group. As Lupton notes, women in general have long tended to be positioned as ‘transgressors of the proper’, with their bodies seen as naturally more ‘open to the world… fluid and leaky, incapable of regulation, escaping and evading the boundaries of the clean and the proper… [and] viewed as more dangerous, defiling and diseased than the male body’ (1999: 140-1). Women have therefore always been expected to pay more attention than men to maintaining bodily integrity, particularly in public spaces. In Melbourne, for example, the very presence of women in public city space has always been subject to scrutiny, but particular condemnation has always been reserved for those who engage in activities such as sex-work or drug use (Brown-May 1998; Denton 2001; Leigh 1995; Summers 1994). Such women are seen to be ‘polluted women’ (Ettorre 1992: 75) who have not only “spoiled” the private sphere’ but also ‘the public sphere of social hygiene’ (77). Of all those who use drugs, the groups who tend to receive particularly strong social condemnation include those who use drugs in public spaces, those who use heroin, those who use drugs intravenously, and those

37 It is important to note that disability is a relative, rather than essential state: something which can be understood to arise through social relations and built-form, rather than through an individual lack or impairment.
who are women (see for example: Boyd 1999; Denton 2001; Ettorre 1992; Leigh 1995). Women who inject heroin in public city space are therefore not simply rendered ‘doubly deviant’ (Broom 1994), but rather minoritarian to at least the power of 4 ($n^4$).

Women who inject drugs in Melbourne’s CBD, however, are not determined by these socio-spatial discourses. They actively shape their relationships to urban space, and to the others they encounter in urban space. The city offers space for resistance and self-creation as much as for moral approbation. It is not only, for example, a place in which to buy and consume drugs, but also to meet people, to shop, to steal or beg for money, to explore new places, to create different ways of being, and to continually destratify the relations between the city and the ‘self’:

*The rain… the trams… the people… I just really love Melbourne… it’s a big city, it’s so diverse, so many different types of people, and I love it that every day I can find something new… that’s what I love about Melbourne, you can turn a corner one day and you’re in a completely different place* (Interview participant 7).

The connections forged with the city produce flows of desire which enable movement and life, and which help to prevent the body from stagnating and striating. These flows are important, given that injecting drug use can also easily become habitualised, dominating movement and connections with the world and stagnating desire and life. The regular, habitual actions of buying and using drugs in the city, for example, can operate to stratify not only the body but also space and time, reducing movement to discrete and predictable speeds and trajectories:

*When you use, your whole life is just revolved around using, like you get up in the morning, and you haven’t got gear with you, so… you struggle to get dressed, and then you catch a tram into the city, and you go and score [buy drugs], and then your day sort of begins* (Interview participant 7).

*I do the same thing every day, come in and score, it’s quite boring actually* (Interview participant 5).

Coming into the city to inject heroin can easily become a daily necessity: a kind of repetitive form of self-medication that enables one to get on with the day. Yet it is
also an event which can intensify the relations between body and space, producing shifts in sensation and proprioception:

[What I like about injecting heroin is] the whoooph of the feeling, and the taste that you get in your mouth from the gear... the stagger that you get from standing up once you’ve had a really good hit (Interview participant 8).

As women move through the city searching for places to inject, they also traverse different levels and spatial intensities which open up fields of bodily variation. Movement through levels of intensity affect bodies in material, yet incorporeal ways. As Massumi notes, ‘to think the body in movement thus means accepting the paradox that there is an incorporeal dimension of the body. Of it, but not it. Real, material, but incorporeal’ (2002: 4). Women’s bodies, and bodily capacities, change in relation to the spaces they encounter: ‘When a body is in motion, it does not coincide with itself. It coincides with its own transition: its own variation’ (4). Women do not move through the city as unified, stable, rational and autonomous beings. They move through the city in conjunction with the spaces they encounter; those spaces affect them, just as they affect those spaces.

One of the most significant spatial striations affecting women’s movement through space, and choice of injecting site, is that of the police who regularly patrol Melbourne’s main drug market areas. The presence of the police – who are sometimes uniformed, sometimes plain-clothed, and sometimes accompanied by trained ‘sniffer’ dogs38 – limits the smooth movement of injecting drug users in and through urban space. Such blockages reduce the capacity of injecting drug using bodies to negotiate various health concerns, such as infection, vein injury or overdose. Avoiding police has, for example, been associated with injectors (and particularly women injectors) being less likely to travel to get sterile injecting equipment or to carry used syringes to safe disposal bins, and thus more likely to share injecting equipment and leave used syringes on the ground (Maher and Dixon 1999). It has also been associated with the rushing of injection, and a higher likelihood of vein damage, infection and overdose (1999).

---

38 In Melbourne, these dogs are officially called Passive Alert Detection (PAD) Dogs and are trained to search for the scent of illicit drugs and alert police of their possible presence. They are mainly used to police the use of amphetamines and other drugs at rave and dance parties, but are also sometimes used to search for heroin and other drugs in the city.
The spaces in which injecting takes place can be understood as assemblages comprising not only the body, the drug, the injecting equipment (such as a needle and syringe, tourniquet, swab, spoon, water ampoule, and so on) and the physical environment (perhaps a milk crate, a tap, a light source), but also a range of spatial intensities and potentials. There is, for example, a certain tendency or impending movement toward the injection of the drug, toward the awaiting ‘hit’. But there are also a range of negative potentialities, including the risks of: being caught by police; being robbed or assaulted by other injectors; developing an infection, a blood-borne virus or a burst artery; or experiencing an overdose. These often conflicting risks reverberate through the injecting assemblage, always present as real but not necessarily actualised potentials. The ways in which women negotiate these competing risks are shaped not only by their knowledge of risk and risk-avoidance strategies, but also by the socio-spatial contexts in which injecting takes place.

The stronger the intensity of the police’s striating force, for example, the more likely it is that women will seek out secluded urban interstices in which to inject: spaces within which they can elude control (Dovey et al 2001; Malins 2000; Malins et al 2006). Hidden alcoves, dog-leg lane ways, and disused stairwells are all popular secluded spaces to inject in. The smooth benefits of these spaces – their ability to elude surveillance – can easily become their danger. Such spaces, for example, are extremely dangerous in the case of overdose, for it is unlikely passers-by will be able to offer assistance. Such spaces also tend to make it difficult to escape from, or get assistance against, other potentially violent city inhabitants:

\[\text{you could be about to do it [inject] and someone could just come in and... hold you up... especially if they're bigger than you, you know, especially if it's a bloke (Interview participant 3).}\]

The sense of vulnerability to attack is particularly high for women injectors, due to the gendered power relations inherent in violence.\(^{39}\) Because of these risks, women often prefer to inject in public toilets which offers a uniquely gendered type of public-

---

\(^{39}\) It is important to note, however, that male injectors are more likely to find themselves involved in violent incidents than women injectors, and women injectors can themselves often be instigators of violence and drug thefts in the CBD. In similar interviews conducted for a previous similar study (Malins 2000), one of the female interview participants talked at length and with great enthusiasm about her ability to violently stand over other drug users in the CBD.
private space (Woodhead 1995: 238). A public toilet can provide not only seclusion from police, but also at least some level of gendered segregation and protection from attack. Toilets also offer a range of other benefits: readily available water, lighting, workbenches for ‘mixing up’, seating (on the toilet with the lid down). In some cases – where toilets are staffed by full-time cleaners (there are two such women’s toilet blocks in Melbourne) – toilets can also offer informal surveillance in the event of overdose (Fitzgerald et al 2004; Malins et al 2006). Perhaps one of the most appealing things about public toilets, however, is the camouflage they offer: that is, the way they enable women who are using the toilets for injecting drugs to blend in and merge with those who are using them for the activity they were designed for. Unlike a laneway, a public toilet is used by a wide range of everyday people; a body entering a public toilet can be an ‘anybody’. By injecting in a public toilet, women can avoid being identified as an injecting drug user, and in doing so, not only avoid the critical gaze of others, but also a negative sense of ‘self’:

probably the silliest of places [I have injected in] was an alleyway near Russell Street... just the thought of getting spotted by someone, not even police, just the judgment of other people... I just didn’t feel good about it... [whereas a public toilet is] just private... I like to keep some sort of dignity about myself (Interview participant 6).

Public toilets are striated spaces which impart smooth space and which enable a level of smooth movement:

Toilets are probably the safest place... you go up and you do your thing and leave (Interview participant 3).

Being able to just ‘leave’ is important not only in terms of being able to avoid becoming physically stuck in a place, but also in terms of avoiding becoming identified and stratified as an injecting drug user. Using in public toilets provides a level of camouflage which allows users to become-other or, more specifically, to begin to move toward ‘becoming-imperceptible... [as] the immanent end of becoming’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 279). Yet ‘to go unnoticed’, as Deleuze and Guattari note, ‘is by no means easy’ (279). Retail and fast-food businesses, for example, often refuse entry to those who look as though they might be injecting:

They wouldn’t let me use the toilets ‘cause I was classed as an addict (Interview participant 4).
Social stratifications and striations hinder movement through urban space. In order to access such spaces, women must therefore work out ways to blend in with the general public, to dress or perform the “self” or body according to certain gendered social norms (see Ettorre 2004: 330-1):

*I take a bit of pride in the way that I look, so I can’t just whack on track-suit pants and go out... normally we [herself and her friend] don’t really look like users, so we don’t get any sort of grief from security guards* (Interview participant 7).

*I haven’t had a problem... I think maybe it’s because I don’t look like a typical drug user... I haven’t seemed to have any run-ins with anyone* (Interview participant 6).

By being careful in relation to what they wear and who they associate with, women are able to find ways of smoothing otherwise striated spaces, and to move through the city relatively imperceptibly. Yet the city’s surveillance mechanisms are no longer purely visual. Police ‘sniffer-dogs’ are now regularly used to patrol Melbourne’s streets for those who are carrying or have recently used drugs. With their ability to striate space via smell, rather than simply through vision, sniffer-dogs shaping spatial movements in new ways:

*I don’t go up near there [the main drug-market area] because... I don’t know if they [the sniffer dogs] would sniff me out for being on it, because it comes out in your pores* (Interview participant 4).

The use of sniffer dogs has been associated with drug consumers being: more likely to rush their drug-taking; less likely to obtain, carry and properly dispose of injecting equipment: and more likely to take all their drugs at once, rather than regulate their dose (NSW Ombudsman 2006: vii).40 The use of sniffer dogs is therefore a spatial striation with extremely negative implications for blood borne virus infections, public health and amenity, and overdose risks.

Yet it is important to remember that not all striations are harmful; at least some level of striation and regulation is necessary for urban health and amenity. Without any

---

40 The dogs, which are intended under legislation in Australia to identify only those carrying ‘supply’ quantities of drugs (rather than those with small quantities, or who have recently used drugs or been in the vicinity of people using drugs), have also been found to have a high false positive rate, with approximately 75% of those indicated by the dogs found to be carrying any drugs at all, and most of these were for small, personal use quantities (NSW Ombudsman 2006: ii-iii).
police in the city, for example, thefts and violence would probably increase, as would public fear. Without syringe disposal bins, the numbers of used syringes left on the streets would likely multiply, as would public health risks. And without at least some level of informal social surveillance, the level of fatal overdoses would almost certainly increase.

The risk of not being found in the event of an overdose – the potential for the body to stop breathing and to destratify completely – can be understood as a limit point of smooth space. It is a destratification of the body, which coincides, or rather, is co-located, with a destratification of space. Without some striations, without, for example, some sort of supervision in the case of overdose, the injecting body is in danger of destratifying too completely, too extremely, and of not being able to return.

Smooth spaces enable greater movement, but some striations are necessary to hold things together. The issue thus becomes: how to find a balance between encouraging and enabling creative lines of flight (which always carry with them some risk) while preventing those which might be destructive. How in other words, to striate space without blocking or rigidifying bodies, without preventing movement.

It is here that holey space comes into play. One of the best examples of holey space in the context of injecting drug use in Melbourne’s CBD, are the several places which have, at times, operated as unofficial, ‘quasi-supervised’ injecting sites (see Fitzgerald et al 2004; Malins et al 2006). These are sites where there is generally someone – a cleaner or caretaker or an agency worker – who is informally looking out for those who are injecting. At sites such as these, there is both a smoothing and a striating of space. Staff tend not to call police, but instead keep an eye on those who inject, making sure they don’t overdose, and calling an ambulance if they do:

_The security guards at night [in the Wesley Church grounds]... I always tell them if I’m going in to have a taste, just in case I drop [overdose], they’re really good, they come and check on you_ (Interview participant 5).

_The ladies in there [the Town Hall Toilets] are quite good, they know what you’re doing and they always ask if you’re alright and make sure things are alright_ (Interview participant 6).
Quasi-supervised sites such as these – unofficial, uncontrolled, unplanned – provide a kind of holey space which enables some level of security and safety in amongst the smooth forces or chaos and overdose death. They do so without blocking movement or stopping flows – of desire, of drugs, of bodies – but instead by providing just enough structure to prevent those flows from going to far.

Baptist Place, a narrow laneway that dog-legs around to a small carpark at the rear of the Baptist Church (see Figure 2), was one popular injecting site which seemed to offer a level of smooth surveillance. The site was at least to some extent smooth, in that offered seclusion from the main urban thoroughfare, and the possibility that injecting might go unnoticed by police, security guards and the general public. Yet it was also striated in a range of ways which make it suitable for injecting. It contains, for example: a set of concrete steps (which are useful for sitting on to inject); a water tap; a light source; a syringe disposal bin mounted on the wall beside the steps; a garbage bin for rubbish; and a convex mirror angled back down the main laneway, which – although designed for cars using the laneway to access the church garage – enables those injecting to see people coming down the laneway:

What I like about it [Baptist] is that... there is a [syringe disposal] box set up there... so there's always somewhere to get rid of your gear... there’s steps, and it’s around the corner which is in a hidden area... there are other little nooks and crannies where people can sit and hit up if they need to... plus there’s a mirror set up so you can see if anyone’s coming up the alley (Interview participant 8).

However, one of the main reasons for its popularity was the supervision, or at least the sense of supervision, provided by the church staff, who run the adjacent free lunch service for the city’s homeless and poor. Instead of calling police or asking injectors to leave, the church staff were tending to condone injecting, but structure it according to certain rules, such as not injecting during lunchtime:

They’re very good... the only time they don’t like anyone shooting up [injecting] there is when they are doing the meals, that one hour of the day from twelve o’clock through to one, and they’re very nice, they’re not rude about it (Interview participant 8).

Staff at the church have also been known to have offered assistance to those injecting, in cases of overdose of violence (Fitzgerald et al 2004; Malins 2000). Baptist has thus
operated as a kind of holey space, one which had enough structure to enable smooth flows of both lunch service clients and injecting drug use, while minimising the chaos of extreme destratifications such as violence and overdose.

However, the popularity of Baptist Place had also begun to make it an unsuitable – and in some cases dangerous – place for women to inject in; the steps were increasingly being littered with rubbish, discarded needles and other injecting equipment; the area often reeked of urine and faeces, and the lane had begun to develop a reputation for and for being a drug use ‘hot-spot’:

Baptist Lane is getting really disgusting... I’ve been around that corner where somebody’s actually [had a] shit up the top of the stairs, and just left newspaper over the top of it, and I’ve been mixing up [the drugs] and then realised, “what the hell is that stench!?... and it’s made me feel just so ill... there’s nothing that attracts flies quicker than blood or pee... oh, it can be really, really disgusting, really disgusting, and I’m disgusted with myself at times for being there (Interview participant 8).

The smooth lines of escape facilitated by Baptist Place were, in other words, increasingly being translated into striated space. By injecting in a space such as Baptist, women risk not only encountering dirt and violence, but also the potential of developing a dirty and disgusting sense of oneself. In order to explore the affects of these virtual relations between space and the injecting drug using body in more detail, I will now turn to Deleuze’s concept of the fold which, I suggest, provides a useful way of conceptualising the materiality of body-space relations.

Body-Space Folds

Drawing on Leibniz’s writings on the Baroque, Deleuze (1993) suggests that all matter is made up of complex folds. These folds complicate distinctions between inside and out, thought and matter, mind and body, organic and non-organic, self and other. The world can not, for Deleuze, be understood as composed of autonomous, bounded entities, but must instead be thought of as a continuous plane of matter or ‘consistency’, which differentiates and actualises itself in various forms through folding. That is, by forming ‘an infinite series of curvatures or inflections’ (24) matter comes to be actualised differentially, as intensive points and nodes, as various bodies
and spaces. The world, in other words, is composed of a single substance, which is simply expressed – or ‘folded’ – in many different ways. Deleuze, citing Pacidus Philalethi (circa 614–15), writes:

The division of the continuous must not be taken as of sand dividing into grains, but as that of a sheet of paper or of a tunic in folds, in such a way that an infinite number of folds can be produced, some smaller than others, but without the body ever dissolving into points or minima (6).

This ontological univocity means that all bodies and spaces can be understood as always already connected to one another. This has implications for ethics and, more specifically, for an ethico-aesthetics as the affects of one body can now be understood to necessarily have implications for all bodies.

The concept of the ‘fold’ is also developed and used by Deleuze in relation to the work of Foucault (Deleuze 1988b). Here the fold becomes a way of emphasising the materiality and spatiality of Foucault’s concept of subjectification, enabling it to be understood as a process of through which the inside (our subjectivity, mind, and body) and the outside (discourse, knowledge, the spatial environment) become intimately entwined. It is through this folding in of the outside that we construct a self and a way of being in the world, which simultaneously folds back upon the outside.

Deleuze identifies four types of folding in the work of Foucault: ‘the folding of our body… the folding of a force impinging on itself… truth enfolded in relation to us, and finally the ultimate folding of the line outside’ (1995: 112-113). The first of these, the folding of the body, is the most useful here as it concerns the material relationship of the body with space. It concerns, in other words, the ways in which the flesh of the body materially enfolds, and unfolds, the world around it. Each spatial assemblage bends and layers itself into our bodies, affecting not only our immediate movements, but also our potentiality for movement. Each space, in other words, impacts not only our subjectivities and identities, but also the very matter of which we are composed.

We are folded by our genes, by the food we consume and by the air we breathe. We are layered by intensive forces of sound, texture, light and taste, by our relationships with others, and our interaction with the spaces around us. At the same time, our
bodies continually bend out into the world: shaping – and transforming – the spaces and places around us. This folded relation blurs the boundaries between the body and space: rendering them, like the interconnected sides of a mobius strip, both distinguishable and indistinguishable at the same time. It also enables the body (or space) to be understood as a multiplicity: an entity that is not simply ‘one’ (singular), nor a collection of many ‘ones’ (as in grains of sand), but rather a unified or continuous ‘many’ (as in pleats of material in a dress). This folded multiplicity is ‘not separated into parts of parts but… divided to infinity in smaller and smaller folds that always retain a certain cohesion’ (Deleuze 1993: 6).

The three other folds which Deleuze identifies in Foucault’s work, can be understood to each inform the ways in which these body-space inflexions take place. The second fold, the folding of force, brings in to play the will or ‘agency’ of the body itself: which Deleuze refers to as the ability of a body to bend power back upon itself, and to regulate – and work creatively upon – its own individual ‘self’. In the case of social (human) bodies, such governance is necessary for the very construction of a ‘self’ or ‘subject’ through which to act, and speak in the social world. This second fold can also be thought of as that which, within Butler’s (1993) concept of performativity, enables a subject to actively construct and shape their own gendered bodily relations to the world. For Butler, the gendered body is something that is produced, reproduced and naturalised through everyday embodied performances. By participating in particular spatial assemblages, and by folding force back upon itself, each body has the capacity to creatively shape its own performances and folded self. However, the potential for bodies to performatively determine their own gendered social identities is extremely limited. For performative articulations of gender only gain their power and effect to the extent that they cite, or draw upon, historically embedded discourses or ‘truths’ (1993).

This then leads to the third fold – that of ‘truth in relation to the self’ – which concerns the ways in which discourses or ‘knowledges’ shape the possibilities for body-space inflections and folds (Deleuze 1988b: 104). Rather than see discourse as something which acts directly and deterministically upon a body or space, the concept of enfolded ‘truths’ enables an appreciation of the way in which discourses come to be layered and embedded without necessarily becoming sedimented. For the idea of
folds suggests that bodies and spaces always retain, however limited, a potential for unfolding and refolding their relations. It is this potential for transformative change, and for the creation of the new, which is encompassed by the fourth fold: that of ‘the line outside’.

This fourth fold is that which forms when a body-space assemblage connects with the creative potentials which lie ‘outside’ of knowledge and thought: which lie, in other words, in the realm of the virtual. It involves the body connecting to chaotic and creative potentials: to a very real, but not yet actualised, field of potentiality. Connecting with the line outside involves opening the body up to new ways of thinking and being. It is an inherently risky practice, for it unravels those stable knowledges of self and identity that allow us to move through the world, and to speak, with certainty. Yet it is also a practice which opens up the possibilities for bodies to create and fold themselves anew.

To the extent that they shape and limit a body, folds are not unlike striations and stratifications. Yet the concept of folding is a way of highlighting the malleability of these striations and the intensive potentiality which is always embedded (or enfolded) within a body or space. This propensity – or virtual intensity – is itself a force generated by the very folding-in of matter which, given the right conditions, has the capacity to unfurl and unfold. Folding also draws attention to symbiotic nature of striations and stratifications, which are never simply imposed from above but involve multi-directional processes. An appreciation of the ways in which the four folds operate in conjunction with one another, within specific spatial contexts, thus enables a far more intricate conceptualisation of body-space relations than the smooth, striated and the holey do alone.

**Injecting Folds in Melbourne**

When women inject drugs in Melbourne’s CBD, they form assemblages which reconstitute both them and the spaces around them. Assemblages of bodies, flows of desire, movements and speeds, social relations, injecting equipment and body fluids fold out into sites of injecting: becoming embedded in urban space. This happens perceptibly, through the leaving behind of injecting rubbish and body fluids. It also
happens imperceptibly, through the creation of discursive spatial imaginings and intensities. These spatial folds – both actual and virtual – then have the potential to fold back into the bodies which traverse them. They have the potential to fold into future bodies all the dirt, disease, and potential bodily practices (carelessness, junkyness, injecting) that comprises the space, corporeally and incorporeally.

When a space such as Baptist Place experiences repeated assemblages of drug use, particular relations of dirt and disease begin to sediment and striate it, as though the concrete itself has enfolded a disease:

> It’s disgusting actually... [I] feel like if I sit down I’m going to catch some deadly disease that’s just manifested from the concrete, like the concrete’s created its own disease from too many people chucking stuff on the ground (Interview participant 7).

At the same time as the space folds in all the rubbish, the dirt, the violence, and the body fluids of injecting bodies, it also folds out into drug-using assemblages: merging with the air, the nose, the stomach; folding into the drugs being mixed up; and becoming part of the self and the body:

> I know it’s ridiculous, but just because the surroundings were dirty, the air was dirty [gestures to her arm... her skin... her body...], it felt somehow... I didn’t like it (Interview participant 1).

> It always smells like piss, it’s just a horrible smell, it’s not a clean place, not at all, and that’s why I hate going there, it just makes me feel dirty (Interview participant 2).

Dirty spaces fold dirt into the body: corporeally and incorporeally. These body-space folds are also affected by the folding in of discourse, or what Deleuze (1988b) refers to as ‘truth enfolded in relation to the self’. Clichéd images of injecting drug users squatting in dark dirty laneways – produced and reproduced in film, photography, television and the media – come to shape the ways in which spaces are understood, experienced and enfolded by the body:

> It was really horrible... dirty, smelly, exposed... I try and avoid the worst associations, you know, clichés of heroin users... shooting up in alleyways, and all that sort of stuff... it smelt of restaurant leftovers and urine, which is a lovely combination, just that rotting vegetable smell... it was cobblestones, discarded wrappers, upside-down milk crates, a lot of dirt on the ground, puddles forming in the
cobblestones, yeah, it was very clichéd, a bad cliché (Interview participant 1).

It feels like, like you see in the movies... just like the way people create an image of users, you know, just down an alleyway, really dirty, really grotty, and you kind of get that feeling about yourself when you’re down there (Interview participant 7).

There is undoubtedly an element of desire associated with clichéd injecting assemblages such as these: assemblages of cobblestones and milk crates; dirt and rubbish. They are assemblages which envelope a great deal of potentiality and which – for some – are likely to enable desire to circulate and to flow. Yet they are also likely – over time – to striate the body, folding in relations of dirt and disease.

One of the most problematic relationships of folding between discourses, spaces and injecting drug-using bodies in Melbourne’s CBD, is that which is mediated by the term ‘junkie’: a derogatory identity category which has long been associated with drug use, particularly heroin injecting. It is a stereotype that encompasses all the clichéd dirtiness, disease, deviancy, crime, dangerousness, laziness, and absence of will that are so commonly associated with injecting drug use. For women injectors – who have long been viewed as especially deviant, dirty and defiled – the term has particular significance (see for example: Boyd 1999; Broom 1994; Ettorre 1992; Hassin 1994; Rosenbaum 1981).

‘Junkie’ can be understood as a truth enfolded in relation to the self, one that it is not only imposed upon those who inject drugs (by the public and the media), but is also taken up and used by injectors themselves, either when claiming a political voice or cultural identity or when distinguishing other, less responsible injectors from themselves:

A lot of people doing rips [thefts] and robbing everyone, and it’s giving us a bad name, that’s why everyone thinks we’re just junkies (Interview participant 5).

Junkies are the ones that just have a whack [inject] and then throw it [the used syringe] on the ground (Interview participant 5).

The affective capacity of the term ‘junkie’ cannot be fully understood through concepts of identity, stigma and stratification. In order to understand its affects, we
must look at the ways in which it folds into the body: as a truth enfolded, as a force of self-on-self (a kind of performative resistance), and as a spatiality:

\[ \text{As soon as you get in there [Baptist Place] you can smell shit and piss, and there’s fits everywhere... junkies that haven’t got fits, especially late at night, they go through the bins, and they empty the bin out and put it everywhere... Yuk!... I hate going there, because I use but I don’t class myself as a junkie (Interview participant 5).} \]

The risk of being stratified as a junkie – or rather, developing ‘junkie folds’ – affects where it is that women choose to inject. Although women always retain the capacity to resist junkie-folds (discursively, performatively and spatially), when they inject in spaces which are dirty, dark, stinky and violent, such folds tend to seep into the body and can, over time, become difficult to shake. For the more folded a body becomes, the less access it has to the virtual outside, and to the possibility of unfolding and refolding its relations.

Sedimented junkie-folds impact upon bodies and bodily potential, limiting what a body can do. They reduce its power to affect and to be affected, its capacity to form future relations with others:

\[ \text{[People think] they’re junkies, they’ve got AIDS, or they’ve got Hep C, and we can’t touch them (Interview participant 5).} \]

This fear – the fear of those who use drugs, and who reek of junkie folds – can be understood in terms of a fear of the dissolution of the boundaries between self and other, between inside and out (Fitzgerald and Threadgold 2004: 408, 410-1, 413, 415-7; Lupton 1999: 3, 126-7, 133-6). We unconsciously, or rather non-consciously,\(^{41}\) recognise that the world is folded and that our own bodies are composed of an infolding of that which surrounds us. The fear of encountering those who use drugs can be connected to a fear of becoming connected to the chaos of the body without organs that is the destratifying drug using body. A fear, that is, of destratifying ourselves.

The disjuncture produced by this fear has important implications for overdose response:

\(^{41}\)Deleuze prefers the term non-conscious to the term unconscious as the latter tends to be associated with Freud’s psychoanalytic concepts of the id and superego.
Usually if someone drops [overdoses] on the street people will walk straight past them [and say] “oh, they’re junkies” (Interview participant 5).

all these people standing around and these two people laying on the ground... and I said “what’s going on?” and they said “oh, it’s just junkies”, and I said “well Jesus, isn’t anyone going to help them?” and they went “oh no, AIDS, AIDS!”... and the boy was blue (Interview participant 9).

For the woman I came across on my way to work that morning, and for the many semi-overdosing bodies I had assisted while working for the Needle and Syringe outreach service, the cultural association of the ‘junky’ identity with dirt, disease, worthlessness and dangerousness, combined with an anxiety regarding the capacity of bodies to ontologically fold and enfold one another, makes it less likely they will be assisted when in need. Perhaps some form of collective bodily destratification is needed:

Some people think “oh, I’m not going to get involved” and they keep walking, and I think some people, they don’t even think, because they’re not in their heart, they’re in their head, so they don’t even think (Interview participant 7).

This idea, that people need to begin to think with a different part of their body – with their heart instead of their head – is an interesting one. It resonates with Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of destratification – a process of leaving behind the organised body (with its brain for thinking and its heart for pumping blood) and beginning to assemble a differently organised body: via the body without organs. Destratifying doesn’t involve ‘checking out of your body’, but rather, becoming more closely aligned with it and with the full potentiality of all of its elements. That is, with the body as a destratified field of potentialities: the body as it can be, rather than as it is. Destratification allows people to put themselves together in the world differently. Most importantly, it enables new relations between people to take shape.

If we are to understand social relations as spatially embedded, however, we need to think destratification in spatial as well as social terms. It will not be enough to simply try to encourage people to think differently about their own health or the health of those around them. By working with spaces and with body-space relations at the level of aesthetics, we might instead be able to shift the ways in which people sense their
health and the health of others, and in doing so, produce more ethically positive relations.

**An Ethico-Aesthetics of Space**

The production of bodies, spaces and social discourses can be understood to take place in conjunction with one another. This means that how space is constructed – how it is built, talked about and popularly imagined – has important implications for bodies: for bodily safety and bodily potential. An ethico-aesthetics of space involves assessing the ways in which spaces impact upon bodies: the ways they impact upon what a body can do; upon its power to act. It involves thinking though the ways in which spaces produce particular striations (of gender, illness, habit, identity and so on), and the ways in which they allow smooth relations of movement both spatially and bodily. It also involves assessing the folds which are already embedded in spaces and the ways in which those spaces might fold out into bodies, affecting their potentials over time.

A spatial ethico-aesthetics of injecting drug use will also necessarily involve assessing and reassembling spaces of injecting. The introduction of supervised injecting facilities – designed specifically to provide a clean, supervised, violence-free space for injecting – would be a productive way to transform current injecting assemblages. Although successful injecting facilities have been introduced in Sydney, as well as a range of cities around the world, including in Canada and across Europe, none has yet been trialed in Melbourne. To be effective, such a facility would ideally constitute a kind of holey space: offering a balance between striated order and smooth possibilities of escape. Enough striation, that is to prevent bacterial and blood borne virus infection, overdose death and assault, yet enough smooth space to ensure that flows of desire and becoming can still find lines of escape.

The supervised injecting facility in Sydney’s Kings Cross, provides a good model of a successful holey space. From the street, the service looks like a nondescript medical facility. It has a large frosted glass window, with a row of chairs just visible behind the frosted glass. The single door is not labeled and is also frosted. The building’s only marking is a single street number which sits above the window. As such, only
those who know about the service and its location would recognise it as an facility for injecting:

On the street, you wouldn’t know unless you’re, pretty much, a user, it’s just like a normal doorway… people wouldn’t know… it’s just a normal door like you’re walking into a coffee shop (Interview participant 4).

The Sydney facility thus operates as both a striation of space and a smoothing of space. It regulates and striates the site of injecting, whilst providing a smooth entry point, which is ambiguous enough for those who enter the site to avoid immediately becoming stratified as injectors. Once inside, there is a waiting room with a reception counter, where new clients are registered with a number and repeat clients check in. No names are collected, and although the numbers themselves are a form of striation, they are a striation which in this case enable those who are injecting to retain at least some smooth space of identity-potential. Clients are then provided with clean injecting equipment (needles, syringes, swabs, sterile water) before being ushered to the sterile injecting area. This area consists of several basins and a row of cubicles; not unlike a row of toilet cubicles without doors. Each cubicle has a syringe disposal container and two numbered injecting sites, each with a stainless steel bench and a chair:

There were sort of like cubicle things, where you could be sort of like private, but at the same time, at all time, people have access to you, but you’re sort of private so you don’t have to be seen if you don’t want to, but you can be kept an eye on (Interview participant 9).

Holey spaces, privacy and supervision, pockets of smoothness and striation. Surveillance striates the space enough to prevent overdose deaths, infections and violence, but not so much that clients feel that their injecting is being closely scrutinised, striated. The facility also incorporates a resuscitation room, a counselling room, and a café/lounge area, where clients are able to access tea and coffee, newspapers, magazines, books, brochures and internet computing facilities. This lounge area has a colourful, relaxed atmosphere, which provides a contrast to the sterility of the injecting area. It is a striation of space, for it is clearly delineated from the injecting area, and has rules which govern the movement of bodies within it. Yet it

---

42 Two of the interview participants had been to Sydney and were able to talk about their experiences of using the Supervised Injecting Facility.
also provides a smooth transition from the more medical setting of the service to the outside world. To facilitate smooth movement to the outside, the service’s exit is at the back of the building, rather than the front, which provides a more inconspicuous socio-spatial trajectory for clients:

*You just go in one door and go out the back door, so it’s pretty much discreet* (Interview participant 4).

This is a striation of space and movement, which translates into a smooth transition of bodies; it reduces the chance of bodies being identified as injectors, and enables them to reconstitute their relations to the world more easily.

If we are to introduce such facilities in Melbourne, as I believe we should, we will need to pay careful attention to these kinds of smooth, striated and holey relationships between injecting bodies and city spaces. A facility which is made too medicalised or sterile, for example, would likely result in women using elsewhere; yet a facility which was allowed to become a ‘junkie’ space through its violence, dirt, or even through the media’s categorisation of it as a place for ‘diseased’ ‘addicts’ or ‘junkies’, would also be unproductive. A facility, however, which provides a level of holey camouflage – a space which is not too rigidly defined and which is continuous and contiguous with consumer spaces and spaces of other bodily practices – would be likely to be far more successful. Such camouflage might be facilitated, for example, by co-locating a supervised injecting facility with other services, such as general medical practices, counselling services, housing referral, legal centres, or even libraries and cafes. While in some small communities, such co-location might prove problematic for injectors wanting to use an injecting facility without running into family or friends who are accessing other services, in a large city such as Melbourne – and provided several such multi-purpose sites were established – such co-location would be less likely to prove problematic in this sense. In any case, careful interior design and process design could be developed to mitigate against such risks.

Conceptualising urban space as intensive, holey and folding will also be important when developing other harm reduction measures, such as educational health promotion strategies. Those which fail to conceive of the injecting moment as an assemblage – which incorporates not only the body, the drug, and the injecting
equipment, but also flows of desire, forces of stratification and incorporeal body-space foldings – will need to be problematised. A recent State Government health promotional campaign regarding the use of ‘ice’ (crystal methamphetamines) provides a good case in point. The campaign made use of a simple billboard image: a stark black background with threatening white text proclaiming: “ICE: It’s a dirty drug”. In addition to the billboards, the State Government also intended to place the advertisement in various drug-using locations around Melbourne’s CBD, specifically: as stickers on laneway rubbish bins, alcoves doors and windows, and as printed text on the toilet paper provided in public toilets. The implications of this campaign – and its direct association of ‘ice’ use with dirt in a very spatialised way – are extremely problematic, considering the ways in which discourse and language fold into space and into bodies to produce disease and dirt. The campaign has negative health and wellbeing implications not only for drug using bodies, but also for all the rest of the city’s inhabitants and visitors who encounter such space-body-discourse assemblages.

If we are to produce an ethico-aesthetics of drug use in city space, one in which new connections between bodies are encouraged rather than blocked, greater effort will need to be put into the production of positive, affirmative urban assemblages: assemblages which enable new encounters between bodies and space, and between various city bodies. Public space overdose memorials, which have appeared in various guises in Melbourne over the past decade, provide an interesting example of what such an affirmative intervention might look like. While such memorials are inextricably tied to sadness and loss, to the extent that they offer the possibility of affirming publicly the value of injecting drug using bodies, they might just provide a means of creating new types of urban drug-related assemblages.

In the following chapter, I continue to explore the folding relationships between injecting drug-using bodies and urban space, this time turning to look at the ways in which various types of overdose memorial might be used to engender a new ethico-aesthetics of urban space. Drawing on Deleuze’s concepts of ‘nomadism’ and the

---

43 Fortunately the City of Melbourne, where I also work part-time as a Drug and Alcohol project officer, refused to support the CBD laneway component of the campaign.
‘refrain’, I develop a framework for examining the social and spatial implications of various artistic, memorial urban interventions for injecting bodies and for urban bodies more generally.
4

Nomad Memories

Memory is the necessity of renewal (Deleuze 1988: 108).

In 2001, an unusual memorial appeared in Melbourne. Its red stenciled words on the footpath beneath my feet caught my attention while wandering along St Kilda’s busy Fitzroy Street. When I stopped to read them, my surprise was mingled with both sadness and delight; the red words formed a tribute to someone who had died of a heroin overdose. Spaced out at intervals along the footpaths of Fitzroy Street and two adjoining streets were a series of these red stencilled messages each one commemorating a different person who had overdosed (see Figure 3). Alongside each tribute was a planter box of flowering poppies (Figure 4) and a clear resin plaque embedded a range of personal objects and ephemera (Figure 5).

Sue-Anne Ware’s memorial installation, entitled Anti-Memorial to Heroin Overdose, delighted me not only because it provided a rare space for publicly mourning and acknowledging the importance of those who have lost their lives through injecting drug use, but also because it provided an interesting departure from dominant forms of public memorialisation. Compared with traditional permanent, stone monuments, trees and plaques, the Anti-Memorial was conspicuously eclectic. Temporary, low to the ground, spatially dispersed, and composed of diverse elements, materials, forms, and colours, the Anti-Memorial not only challenged dominant narratives of who is to be remembered, but also how they are to be remembered.

Since 1999, when heroin overdose deaths in Australia reached a peak of over 1100 deaths, finding ways to remember and commemorate those who have died has been given a great deal of attention within the drug and alcohol service sector. One of the most significant initiatives to have emerged is the National Overdose Awareness Day,

---

44 During the 1990s, overdose deaths had begun to dramatically rise, from an average of around 350 deaths a year to just over 1100 in 1999. In 2000, this figure had dropped slightly to approximately 950, and then by 2001 had plummeted back to just under 400. Since then it has remained just under 400 a year (Degenhardt and Roxburgh 2007). Of the 1100 recorded in 1999, 359 were in Victoria (VIFM 2005).
which was launched in 2001 and is held in the last day of August each year. To mark the event, a range of drug and alcohol agencies hold formal memorial services attended by families and friends of those who have died. Participants have had the opportunity to wear a small stainless steel overdose memorial badge in the shape of a ribbon, to present readings or eulogies, to sing or perform, or to join in the collective creation of a commemorative object such as a quilt, mural or origami-crane mobile.

These memorial services, badges, and activities perform both personal and political functions. On a personal level, they provide an important time and place for families, friends and service providers to come together to mourn their loss. This healing process is particularly significant, given that for many of these people the processes of mourning have been hindered by the stigma and shame surrounding illicit drug use. Many drug-using clients of services,\textsuperscript{45} for example, report having been excluded from attending or speaking at formal funeral services by family members who do not want to disclose the drug use of the person who has died, or associate their memory with their drug use. Some also report having missed friends’ funeral services because their transient lifestyle has meant that news of the death has not reached them in time. In this sense, then, the memorial services and activities can be understood to fill a significant gap in the healing processes for friends, families, service providers and the small communities which are generated around drug use.

On a political level, and as the official name of the day suggests, these memorials are also about raising awareness and generating social and political support. By publicly re-asserting the value of the lives of those who use drugs, and, through this, removing some of the stigma associated with drug use, such memorials operate, at least in some small way, to shift the possibilities for everyday socio-spatial relations. They also provide a useful opportunity for gently advocating – through action and words – for more humane social and policy responses to drug use. Each year, a range of politicians, policy makers and media outlets are invited to the memorial services; and each year, the ceremonies generate at least some level of media coverage and political attention. In this sense, the memorials can be understood to work as a form of social

\textsuperscript{45} Based on fieldwork interviews and informal discussions with Needle and Syringe Program clients and staff.
and political activism, providing a space through which the identity and human rights of the drug user might be reaffirmed.

Yet what do such memorials actually offer in terms of an ethico-aesthetics? What sorts of problematic social, political and spatial formations might they be inadvertently supporting? And how might we begin to engage the socio-political and ethico-aesthetic potentials of public overdose memorials more effectively?

Recently, there have been discussions amongst service providers in Melbourne regarding the establishment of a new, more permanent overdose memorial site. One of the main suggestions discussed so far has been the planting of a tree, perhaps alongside the Yarra River, which would be accompanied by a commemorative plaque. Tree planting is a popular form of commemoration and in Australia’s capital, Canberra, a similar tree and plaque dedicated to those who have died of overdose was established in 1996.

If we are to effectively activate a site of public overdose remembrance in Melbourne, I believe we need to think carefully about the various ways in which memory and memorials operate, and the ways in which they can be mobilised to generate productive socio-spatial relations. In Chapter 3, I showed that the construction of urban spaces has implications for the production of bodies and for an ethics of social relations. In this chapter, I specifically explore the role of memory in the production of a future sociability, and the potential of public overdose memorials to generate new connections between injecting bodies and space, and between different bodies in public space. I ask, more specifically, what kinds of memorials might begin to open up – rather than close off – the capacity for bodies to become-other?

**The Power of Memory**

Everything happens as if the universe were a tremendous Memory (Deleuze 1988c: 77).

In his book on Henri Bergson, Deleuze (1988c) outlines a conception of pure memory as an a-subjective, universal, virtual force. Rather than something located or stored in the brain, pure memory is here the impersonal force of ‘a past in general’ (56) or what
Massumi refers to as a ‘memory without content… a pure pastness’ (2002: 15). It is this pure pastness without content which, as it folds into lived experience, provides a continuity to lived experience, connecting together various sensations as a body moves through space-time. As Deleuze notes, ‘it is the recollections of memory that link the instants to each other and interpolate the past in the present’ (1988c: 25). It is in this sense that pure memory can also be understood as pure duration, which – when inserted into matter – is that which enables sensation, movement and life (94).

The continuity provided by the actualisation of pure memory is therefore not in the least bit static. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, the actualisation of the virtual is always a process of differentiation. The actualisation of memory’s virtual field of intensity is therefore also that which enables each body to differ from itself and to go on differing from itself through space-time. Deleuze writes: ‘Memory is essentially difference and matter essentially repetition’ (1988c: 93); together memory and matter produce lived experience as a repetition of this difference. Each body or substance can be understood to express its own ‘rhythm of duration’ (32, 76), which is another way of saying that each has its own mode of being in the world or capacity for affecting and being affected. These rhythms change over time as the past (memory) folds into (and out from) the present. At the same time, they continually bear upon the future, shaping that which is yet to come. Deleuze writes:

Memory… is the membrane which, in the most varied ways… makes sheets of past and layers of reality correspond, the first emanating from an inside which is always already there, the second arriving from an outside always to come, the two gnawing at the present which is now only their encounter (1989b: 206).

Memory, in this sense, does not determine the present, but is co-existent with it; it provides a rhythmic intensity to our perceptions, attitudes, movements and socio-spatial relations. This rhythmic intensity is experienced by the body, first and foremost, as a sensation: a colour, a sound, a smell; a life, a death, a grief. These asubjective affects and hæceities are felt by the body, well before they come to be represented in thought or language. They produce imperceptible shifts in movement and perception, and have the capacity to transform a body and its relations to the world: its relations to that which has already happened, that which is happening and that which is yet to come. As Parr suggests, ‘memory can distribute, unstitch, and
transform by its very movement’ (2008: 152); ‘memory poses the possibility of deterritorialisation, because in its unconditional form it has the capacity to actively disrupt, create divergences and new historical beginnings’ (2004: 9).

Yet while pure memory carries with it this revolutionary power of becoming, it is a different form of memory – stratified, representational memory – that constitutes memory in the common or everyday sense of the word. When the sensations of memory are processed by the brain, or communicated in language, a movement of reterritorialisation takes place, wherein memory comes to be compartmentalised, reduced to specific ‘recollections’ or ‘Memories’. These are memories separated by times and dates, tied to particular places or people, and structured according to set narratives of meaning and value. This process of reterritorialisation tends to increase over time, with longer-term memories becoming increasingly ‘arborescent and centralised… hierarchical systems with centers of significance and subjectification’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 16).

Following Bergson and Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) thus distinguish between two systems of memory: one which is rhizomatic, ‘multilinear’ and populated by hæcceities and becomings (virtual, pure memory), and one which is arborescent and ‘punctual’, and tied to linear notions of time. They write:

* A system is termed *punctual* when its lines are taken as coordinates… or as localisable connections; for example, systems of arborescence, or molar and mnemonic systems… Memory has a punctual organisation [to the extent that]… every present refers simultaneously to the horizontal line of the *flow* of time… which goes from an old present to the actual present, and the vertical line of the *order* of time… which goes from the present to the past, or to the representation of the old present… These systems are arborescent, mnemonic, molar, structural; they are systems of territorialisation or reterritorialisation (294-5).

It is punctual memory that comes to be represented and communicated within majoritarian versions of history, and dominant narratives of truth, being and identity (296). Nietzsche, they note, ‘opposes [this] history not to the eternal but to the subhistorical or superhistorical: the Untimely, which is another name for hæcceity, becoming, the innocence of becoming’ (296). This ‘Untimely’ is pure memory, pure duration, pure becoming – populated by sensations, affects, hæcceities. Activating the
Untimely, Deleuze and Guattari suggest, involves a kind of ‘forgetting’ (296), not in the sense of erasing or disregarding memory, but rather, in the sense of releasing it from the arborescent categories imposed upon it and affirming its deterritorialising potential.

These two systems of memory – the punctual system of orderly memories on the one hand (the strata) and the rhizomatic field of pure, deterritorialising memory on the other (its BwO) – together shape the ways in which memory comes to be actualised in the social field. The former enables the affective force of memory to be distilled into a manageable, communicable form, but as such it necessarily loses some of its affective potential. The latter is affect, pure and simple – unsettling, disconcerting, chaotic and revolutionary – but as such, it necessarily carries with it a danger: the risk of extreme destratification (catatonia or despair) that can come about through an encounter with chaos, particularly the chaos of traumatic memory.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) offer up the idea of the refrain as a way of conceptualising the possibility of an in-between, in which the chaotic forces of the virtual (pure memory) can be reigned in without actually being territorialised. A refrain may be thought of as any informal or rudimentary expression – a song, a movement, a drawing, an installation – which uses memory and ritual in order to comfort a body and its relations: to ground it in the known, the reassuring, the secure. A familiar rhyme or song, for example, can act as a refrain:

A child in the dark, gripped with fear, comforts himself by singing under his breath… he takes shelter, or orients himself with his little song as best he can. That song is like a rough sketch of a calming and stabilising, calm and stable, centre in the heart of chaos (311).

A refrain works toward the marking out of a territory or ‘home’; a place (or rather duration) in which one can feel safe. ‘It is a question’, as Deleuze and Guattari write, ‘of keeping at a distance the forces of chaos knocking at the door… How very important it is, when chaos threatens, to draw an inflatable, portable territory’ (1987: 320). Yet the ‘portable territory’ of the refrain is very different to the territory of the strata. Refrains soothe and comfort through rhythm rather than through order and organisation. Instead of codifying, delineating and territorialising time and space, the refrain works by composing a temporary and transitory milieu. This milieu provides a
rhythm and melody to chaos without striating it, without assigning it a fixed ‘meter’ or ‘cadence’ (313). Its movement is ‘gestural’: qualitative, rather than quantitative; composed of ‘territorial motifs’ rather than representational forms; and tied as much to duration and memory (the virtual) as to a territory or space (the actual).

Refrains offer a respite that is temporary rather than permanent – a kind of ‘holey space’ – from which it becomes possible to open again onto chaos. As Deleuze and Guattari suggest, ‘one ventures from home on the thread of a tune’ (1987: 311). The sonorous milieu of the refrain ‘does not merely isolate and join but opens onto cosmic forces that arise from within or come from outside’ (1994: 185-6). Referring to the refrain as a ‘circle’ one draws around oneself, they write: ‘one opens the circle not on the side where the old forces of chaos press against it but in another region, one created by the circle itself. As though the circle tended on its own to open onto a future’ (1987: 311).

The refrain becomes a way, therefore, of negotiating the stratifying punctual tendency of memory on the one hand, and its chaotic, destratifying potential on the other. It provides just enough of a grounding to enable one to gather strength and move on, to make new connections, and launch toward an unknown future.

Practices of public commemoration, memorialisation and remembrance can be understood as territorial refrains through which the social field seeks to activate and organise affective, chaotic, desiring potentials of memory. The production of a memorial can operate to provide a space for the organisation and stratification of public and private grief: providing a scaffolding which helps to prevent our sorrow from overwhelming us. It can also operate to re-activate memory, drawing on its affective capacity for the purposes of education, reflection, legitimisation, or social change. All memorials entail some form of working with, or managing, the chaos of memory. It is the mode of organisation which this management takes – whether, for example, it stratifies and territorialises memory, or provides it with a milieu through which it can open onto a future – which has implications for the kinds of bodily socio-spatial relations that it makes possible.
Sites of Memory

Theorists have written extensively on the ways in which the majority of public memorials and monuments, whether seeking to provide solace or education, tend to operate in ways which stratify the desiring force of memory. Official public monuments and memorials, such as those dedicated to soldiers, explorers and politicians, provide perhaps the best example of the stratifying tendency of public sites of memory. Most are established according to a majoritarian logic of History which, as Deleuze and Guattari note, tends overwhelmingly to be ‘written from the sedentary point of view and in the name of a unitary State apparatus’ (1987: 23). Such History, they write, is always that ‘of the majority, or of minorities as defined in relation to the majority’ (292). Most pay tribute to majoritarian bodies (white, masculine, human) and present a version of events which suits majoritarian interests. Across Australia, for example, colonial, masculine narratives of heroism, bravery, ‘mateship’ and camaraderie are everywhere carved and set into stone (Ware 2004: 121-2), while minoritarian bodies and perspectives (such as those of women, Indigenous peoples, homeless people, drug users, or even animals and trees) are generally either ignored, or overcoded by majoritarian narratives (Bulbeck 1991: 3-4; Jacobs 1998: 269).

Many sites of memory use plaques or inscriptions to ascribe and prescribe majoritarian meanings and significances to memory, dictating what is to be remembered and how it is to be remembered. These inscriptions are often designed to harness memory in a way that works to produce and reproduce idea of the nation, and to tie it to particular national ideals and identities. A good example of this is the inscription accompanying the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne, a site dedicated to the memory of Australian and New Zealand World War II (Anzac) veterans. The inscription, a relatively recent addition to the memorial, has been carved into a stone wall and reads:

*Anzac is not merely about loss. It is about courage and endurance and duty and love of country and mateship and good humour and the survival of the sense of self-worth and decency in the face of dreadful odds.*
Despite proclaiming the multiple nature of memory, this inscription nonetheless overcodes WWII with a particular, limited set of nationalistic ideologies. These masculine ideals of camaraderie and ‘mateship’ dominate the Australian war memory landscape and have long become embedded and enshrined in narratives of Australian nationalist identity (Buchbinder 1994; Nicoll 2001). Such narratives necessarily obscure and preclude other readings of the war (such as the stories of children, women or Indigenous participants, as well as those readings which may associate it with economics, state violence, murder, recruitment of the young and the poor, blind obedience, and pedagogies of hatred and othering). The explicit reenactment of these dominant narratives in the Shrine of Remembrance, operates to reproduce masculine nationalist ideologies as well as to stifle the activity of ongoing critique and meaning-making.

Yet the territorialisation of memory within public monuments and memorials is not always this explicit. The ways in such sites are constructed – their general lay-out and aesthetics – also tend to stratify and rigidify memory. Generally made of solid, long-lasting materials such as stone or bronze, the very permanence of public monuments and memorials tends to convey a sense that history itself is fixed, and that the particular version of history they present is ‘as naturally true as the landscape in which they stand’ (Young 1999: 2). The solidity of their form enables ‘the object of commemoration [to] be understood as a completed stage of history, safely nestled in a sealed-off past’ (Savage, cited in Ware 2004: 121), rather than a topic of contemporary concern. This also reproduces an idea of time as ‘linear and homogenous’, a model which, as Edkins notes, ‘suits a particular form of power – sovereign power, the power of the modern nation-state’ (2003: xv). By reproducing a sense of time and history as a singular, straightforward linearity, rather than a complex and rhizomatic multiplicity, such monuments hide the fact that all sorts of forces and bodies (including, perhaps especially, the state itself) might be also implicated in and connected to the event being remembered. As Edkins explains, the sense of space-time security generated by the solid, permanent form of a monument has the capacity to confer a sense of legitimation upon the state as a provider of security and order, whilst obscuring its role in producing disorder and trauma (xv).
Most public memorials and monuments are also designed in such a way that they prevent or discourage viewers from being able to interact with them at close-range. Often built on a hill or a plinth, sometimes surrounded by a moat or a fence, many require viewers to stand back and look upwards to see them: endowing them with an aura of authority and ascendant spirituality. As Ware notes, such monuments tend to ‘prescribe a certain ritual form of interaction’ (2004: 121), limiting the kinds of encounters between viewers and memorials – and between bodies in urban space – that are possible. In preferencing the visual over the tactile or ‘haptic’, and long-distance over close-range perception, these monumental forms tend to reflect and reproduce a very modernist logic of perception. This is a logic which favours ‘rational’ distant encounters with ‘whole’ forms over abstracted, close and chaotic encounters with part-forms. It is a logic that produces, as Burk suggests, ‘a scopic regime of linear perspective and the naturalisation of omniscient (and masculinist) “gaze”’ (2006: 950). For Deleuze and Guattari, this modernist, long-distance aesthetic constitutes a striation of space for it produces a ‘constancy of orientation, invariance of distance… [and the] constitution of a central perspective’ (1987: 494). Such long-distance vision, combined with a solid stone form, assists in the production of a history, memory and sociality that are fixed, unified and stratified (Burk 2006: 950-1). Together they produce the illusion that memory itself is solid and permanent: that it is, as Deleuze and Guattari note, ‘a model to be copied’ (1987: 378) rather than a multiplicity to be constantly negotiated.

The use of symbolism within a memorial can add to this stagnant territorialisation of memory, tying it to particular representational forms and overcoding it with particular stratified meanings. Memorials often use symbolic forms of representation: a pond to symbolise reflection, a tree to symbolise growth and life. To the extent that such forms represent, rather than affectively produce reflection or growth, they territorialise memory. Instead of engaging with the potentiality of virtual memory, such forms lock memory into particular relations of meaning and value.

46 In Christian religions, for example, to look up is to look toward God and the Heavens. Churches, often built on hills, tend to be designed to accentuate this relation and produce a particular bodily and sensory relation with space. Church architecture, for example, tends to draw one’s eyes upwards toward Christ and the Cross, toward light streamlining through stain-glassed windows, and toward the high vaulted ceilings which reach up to the heavens (McGrath 2006: 328).
The *Freedom Tower* currently being built at the site of New York’s 9/11 attacks provides a good case in point. As its name suggests, Libeskind’s *Freedom Tower* is designed to symbolise US ‘freedom’, rising up (vertical, hierarchical, linear, solid) against threat of anti-US terrorism. The tower’s floor height of 1368 feet (excluding mast) is designed to replicate and represent the height of the original WTC building, while its full height of 1776 feet (including mast) represents the year of US independence. Such ‘heavy-handed symbolism’ (Parr 2008: 129), produces and reinforces a notion that ‘the relevance of memory in the context of contemporary cultural production is purely symbolic’ (10), rather than active and dynamic. In this case, it forcibly territorialises the memory of 9/11 upon nationalistic ideals of freedom, security and independence. In doing so, it perpetuates the binaries which pit terrorism against US might, and thereby reinforces existing social divisions (10). In other words, rather than produce a site of active, productive memory, which might lead toward positive ethical change and new social connections, the *Freedom Tower* perpetuates the very relations and ways of being in the world that support acts of terror to begin with. As Parr notes:

> when the Twin Towers and pentagon were attacked on 9/11 it was specifically American values that were assaulted… American military might, and Western capitalism. With this in mind it seems a futile gesture for the designers to focus on repeating the self-same symbolic vocabulary that came under attack in the first instance (130).

By generating an idea of memory as fixed and true, located in a specific time and place, and involving ritualised bodily practices (and postures) of remembrance, public sites of memory risk reducing, rather than increasing, the activation of memory in the present as it folds into the future. As a range of theorists have shown, territorialised sites of memory such as these risk becoming a kind of proxy for memory-work (Edkins 2003: 134; Young 1999: 2, 1994: 20) and, as such, risk stifling debates about current forms of violence or oppression (Parr 2004: 9). When sites territorialise memory in these ways, the possibilities for social change are necessarily reduced, and

---

47 Parr has shown, for example, how the sheer ubiquity and fixity of many memorials to the Holocaust can work to produce Holocaust memory as a kind of obstinate ‘fact’, which can then stand in the way of contemporary debates about current forms of genocide, brutality and oppression, particularly in relation to Israeli violence in Palestine. Deleuze (2006: 199) has also noted that the ‘exceptional’ plight of the Jews has in many ways come to overcode, and make possible, current oppressions of Palestinian peoples, with claims of ‘anti-Semitism’ working to block productive questions being raised (in art, in the media, in academia) in relation to Palestine.
‘the future’, as Parr suggests, ‘ends up turning into some kind of casualty of the past’ (9).

**Desire and Memory**

A useful way of understanding the territorialisation of memory within public memorials and monuments is to think of it, following Parr (2008), in terms of investments and arrangements of desire. As a virtual force, memory, particularly memory arising from trauma, produces flows of desire which come to be invested in various ways in the social field. ‘The power of collective memory’, Parr notes, ‘lies in how memory is put to work by the social field’, and ‘the kind of reality that emerges all depends on the kind of investment the social field gives to the energies and affects traumatic memory produces’ (106-107). Fascistic investments of desire are those which seek to organise, overcode and block flows of memory-desire, giving them particular prearranged functions or directions, and channeling them into particular predetermined outcomes. Here ‘the energies and affects the labour of memory produces are coded and given a fixed use. That is, as trauma registers throughout the social field it functions as a determinate entity’ (16-17). By contrast, schizoid investments of desire are those which affirm the deterritorialising potential of memory, putting it to work in ways that activate its capacity disturb and disrupt established ways of being, thinking, remembering and doing. A site of memory, notes Parr:

> either affirms, legitimates, and advances a paranoid (fascistic) investment of social desire, or it stirs forth an open polyvocal (schizoid) one... the latter is a critical and joyful movement; the former immunises us against the past while rendering the future mute (12).

As such, the way in which a memorial invests desire has implications not only for the possibility of memory’s actualisation in the present, but also the future.

Understanding sites of memory as investments of desire, also draws attention to the ways in which we all collectively produce and reproduce the very fascist memorial investments which tend to oppress us. The fascist tendencies of public memorials and monuments are not, for example, simply imposed upon us by the state, or by a
majoritarian elite. They are the result of our own investments of desire and our
tendency – particularly in the face of trauma – to crave a familiar form of memory and
remembrance, one which soothes and comforts rather that challenges and disrupts
(Doss 2002: 70). We all yearn for a level of stratification, refuge and stability. This is
because, as Deleuze and Guattari note:

we are always afraid of losing… our security, the great molar
organisation that sustains us, the arborescences we cling to, the
binary machines that give us a well-defined status, the resonances we
enter into, the system of overcoding that dominates us – we desire all
that… We flee from flight, rigidify our segments, give ourselves over
to binary logic… we reterritorialise on anything available; the only
segmentarity we know is molar, at the level of the large-scale
aggregates we belong to, as well as at the level of the little groups we
get into, as well as what goes on in our most intimate and private
recesses. Everything is involved: modes of perception, kinds of

The spontaneous memorials which tend to appear following unexpected traumatic
events such as road accidents, murders, and natural disasters, provide a good example
of the social tendency to territorialise memory. Despite their chaotic, unplanned and
disorderly appearance, the flowers, crosses, photos, flags, candles, teddy-bears, cards
and other memorabilia typically left at spontaneous memorials, generate a kind of
comforting refrain within a space of chaos and despair. Yet it is concerning how often
these refrains end up closing in on themselves, rather than opening onto an outside
which might enable new modes of being in the face of trauma (Doss 2002: 70). And it
is concerning how many – particularly those which gain wide public attention and
participation – tend to unwittingly reproduce and reinforce particular, limited social
narratives of history, grief, nationalism, morality and justice.

The spontaneous memorials which proliferated at the site of the World Trade Centre
attacks in New York, provide a perfect case in point. Of the memorial tributes left at
the site and in the surrounding streets, US flags and images of the flag were common,
as were messages such as ‘God Bless America – United we stand’, ‘RIP Heroes’, and
‘Support our Troops’ (see Young 2005: 14).

Such tributes work to simplify complex events and issues, rendering history black and
white and reducing the possibilities for the future to binaries (‘you’re either with us or
against us’). Such binary frameworks necessarily narrow down what it is possible to say and think. As Edkins notes, after 9/11 it was ‘difficult to distinguish calls for a recognition of the trauma from calls for revenge’ (2003: 19). The following handwritten note, which was attached to some flowers and tied to the wire fence surrounding Ground Zero, illustrates this blurring of grief and revenge:

*Our prayers and thoughts to all you lovely innocent people who died or were injured through the evil of 9/11 and to your loving families, carers and friends: God Bless... God Bless Great Britain, U.S.A. and our Allies* (cited in: Sidaway and Mayell 2007: 150).

This message operates not only as an expression of sympathy and goodwill, but as a mechanism for re-enforcing a clear binary split between Good, Innocent, Christian Americans and their Allies on the one hand, and Evil, Guilty, Non-Christian, Non-allied, Terrorists on the other. In doing so, it forecloses the possibility of forgiveness or understanding, and precludes critical reflection about how the US and its Allies might be implicated in developing the kinds of socio-political conditions that led to the attacks of 9/11 in the first place. It also directly binds the response to the trauma to nationalism and allied military retaliation and warfare. As Parr notes, this kind of ‘paranoid mode of memory labor whereby Western nationalism (liberalism, freedom, and goodness) is pitted against Eastern fundamentalism (terrorism, oppression, and evil)’ fuels ‘a repressive social field’ through which national security, cultural censorship and war all come to be reified (2008: 84). To the extent that we participate in this kind of territorialisation of memory, whether through the production of spontaneous memorials, or participation within sites of memory more broadly, we risk reproducing the very relations, social orders and ways of being which made a traumatic event possible in the first place.

However, spontaneous memorials also testify to the capacity of the social field to generate resistance to dominant forms of remembrance. Their amorphous, disordered, haptic, interactive and temporary character, hints toward a kind of deterritorialisation of memorial culture which may help to access and actualise pure memory. Amongst the more sentimental, stratified tributes to nation and morality, there can often be found minoritarian counter-narratives, which seek to undermine the dominant binaries otherwise being established. At Ground Zero, for example, some messages called for the nation to ‘Make Love, Not War’ and to realise that “The only way to battle
unconditional hate is with unconditional love’ (cited in: Young 2005: 14). Others directly opposed the linking of remembrance with revenge by writing: ‘Our grief is not a cry for war!’ (Edkins 2003: 104; Engle 2007: 70). Such counter-narratives are indicative of the ways in which the desire-flows of memory can and do also generate movements of resistance. We desire stratification, but we also yearn for lines of escape.

In Melbourne, small spontaneous overdose memorials occasionally appear in city laneways, alcoves, and parks marking the place where someone has died. Sometimes these take the form of a simple cross or “RIP” graffitied on a laneway wall (see Figure 6); at other times they take the more elaborate form of a temporary shrine of flowers and cards (see Figure 7). Such acts of memorialisation cite familiar modes of grieving and memorialisation; they provide a comforting, territorial refrain for those who have recently lost a friend or family member. Yet they also offer a resistance to dominant forms of public memory, challenging the categories of who is to be remembered, and where and how they are to be remembered (see also: Fitzgerald and Threadgold 2004: 412).

Over the last 30 years or so, as the territorialising nature of official memorials and monuments has come under increasing academic scrutiny, a range of counter-monuments and anti-memorials have begun to appear in public space (Bulbeck 1991; Burk 2006; Legg 2005; Wasserman 2002; Young 1994, 1995, 2000). Like Ware’s Anti-Memorial to Heroin Overdose, such sites of counter-memory are explicitly designed to challenge dominant forms of memory and memorialisation. As Parr suggests, ‘it is only through some kind of antiproduction… that stereotypical or habitual modes of remembrance are broken’ (2008: 89). Yet in what ways and to what extent do these counter-memorials actually deterritorialise memory and open onto an outside? And what use might they be in constructing future overdose memorials?

**Anti-Memorials and Counter-Monuments**

There are by now many sites of memory which can be said to offer an alternative to dominant majoritarian forms of commemoration and remembrance. Many do so by drawing attention to the plight of minority groups. Examples include: the *Hunger*
Memorial to victims of famine in New York’s Battery Park; the Homomonument to gay victims of oppression in Amsterdam; and the Corroboree Tree in Melbourne’s Fitzroy Gardens, which is dedicated to the traditional Indigenous Wurundjeri owners of the land. These memorials work to bring visibility to marginalised groups, and as such, constitute powerful political tools. Yet it is important to recall the limitations of such processes of representation and identity politicking. To the extent that a minority segments itself into a particular identity-group, and speaks on behalf of that group, it develops what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as a recognisable ‘faciality’ (1987: 167-191) which necessarily supports the very systems of stratification and segmentarity which it is otherwise fighting against. Where a minority does succeed in gaining visibility and a faciality, they are likely to simply become a new category amongst the majority, while doing nothing to challenge the majoritarian system itself. This is a victory which, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, ‘consists only in translating the minorities into denumerable sets or subsets, which would enter as elements into the majority [to] be counted among the majority’ (470).

The Corroboree Tree provides a good example of the way in which a memorial to a minoritarian group can easily be territorialised within majoritarian modes of history and memory. The memorial consists of a long-dead tree trunk which was placed in the Fitzroy Gardens and established as a formal landmark in 1983 through the installation of a European-style, ‘Heritage Green’ painted railing fence and plaque which identified it as an object of significance to local Wurundjeri Indigenous peoples. While the memorial did draw attention to the object and its significance, it also worked to distance people: both from the original position and landscape of the tree, and from the tree itself preventing them from coming close to the smell, sound, and texture of the tree. It also designated the tree as a ‘safe’ European, museum-style exhibit (Ware 2004: 122), thereby stagnating its capacity to transform the ways in which viewers might engage with Indigenous memory. As Ware argues:

The Brunswick-green fencing and a bronze plaque identified the corroboree tree as a memorial object… [but] divorced the tree from its cultural origins… While such memorials may increase the visibility of othered cultures in Australian society, they may not always do so in ways that empower those memorials as genuinely alternative forms (122).
The memorial thus operated as both a making-visible and a containment: a territorialisation of Indigenous memory into a form that could be accepted into the colonial white majoritarian memory system. Sanitised, neutralised and controlled. It gave the impression of inclusiveness, without really being inclusive, and it transformed Indigenous visibility into an aesthetics that was palatable to majoritarian interests. In short, rather than bring people into contact with a minoritarian memory, the memorial colonised memory, dividing Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and repeating yet again the long history of violent colonisation within Australia.

Another, more direct way in which memorials have sought to challenge majoritarian memory is by installing counter-memorial ‘additions’ onto existing memorials and monuments. Such additions seek to deterritorialise majoritarian memory by drawing attention to another memory or history that has been obscured by the existing memorial. As such they are, in many ways, more powerful than the memorials dedicated to a minority group, for they not only render visible the minoritarian history, but also render perceptible the contentious and political nature of memory-making itself. However, such additions still tend to constitute a form of oppositional identity politics, and to rely upon and reproduce the very stratified identity categories and binaries that operate to suppress minorities to begin with. To the extent that they also seek to reveal the real ‘truth’ to memory, they also fail to problematise the very notion of truth as it relates to memory and history. While such memorial additions may enable certain temporary gains for a particular minority group, they do little to challenge the underlying majoritarian modes of history and memory themselves, nor to open the processes of memory-making onto a deterritorialised outside. As Deleuze and Guattari suggest:

> The power of the minorities is not measured by their capacity to enter and make themselves felt within the majority system… but to bring to bear the force of the nondenumerable sets, however small they may be, against the denumerable sets... via a pure becoming of minorities... Generally speaking, minorities do not receive a better solution of their problem by integration… Their tactics necessarily go that route. But if they are revolutionary, it is because they carry within them a deeper movement that challenges the worldwide axiomatic (1987: 471-2).
A minoritarian memorial, therefore, needs to not only challenge or problematise existing memory, but to creatively generate a movement elsewhere, one that dismantles the very system of categorisation that renders a group minoritarian in the first place. A good example of these tensions in practice is provided by the Another View Walking Trail, a series of 17 Indigenous memorial installations and additions to Melbourne’s colonial sites and monuments. Constructed in 1995, the Trail was designed to promote national ‘Reconciliation’ between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians by rendering-visible Indigenous peoples’ experiences, histories and relationships to urban space. In many ways, it was a brilliant intervention, one which challenged not only official memory, but also ways of doing memorialisation. Designed to be viewed by following a map-guided walking trail, the memorial incorporated an element of motion into its affective force. Moreover, it encouraged participants to engage with urban space in a new way: helping to render perceptible the colonial styles of mobility, speed, time and aesthetics which striate Melbourne’s CBD. As Morris suggests, ‘the trail and its installations remind us that everyday foot journeys in the city are implicitly bound up in acts of both inscription and erasure of the (post)colonial city’ (2001: 93).

In contrast to the grey stone forms that make up Melbourne’s official monuments and sites of memory, the Trail’s installations comprised a diversity of materials, styles, positions, sizes, and colours. In one place, for example, the memorial presented some bones and a noose embedded in wooden totem poles, in another it appeared in the form of a mosaic depicting the Rainbow Serpent of Indigenous Dreamtime stories. And in contrast to the long-distance, unified visual mode of interaction favoured by these traditional monuments, most of the Trail’s installations were small and designed to be viewed at close-range. These elements encouraged a tactile, haptic treasure-hunt kind of foraging which necessitated new styles of bodily engagement with each site. As such, the memorial worked to encourage an affective connection between the body and the process or movement of memory itself: a bodily engagement with the act of remembering and with its virtual and revolutionary potential.

However, there are several ways in which the Trail also worked to reterritorialise memory. First, as Jacobs notes, at many of its sites it mobilised ‘traditionalised constructs of Aboriginality’ (1998: 271), such as the Rainbow Serpent and other
Dreamtime imagery. To the extent that it ‘sought to reeducate the public of Melbourne about the “true” history of the city and the nation’ (269) by revealing its ‘real’, hidden history, the Trail failed to deterritorialise the idea of truth itself as it relates to memory and history. Although it drew attention to the contentious nature of memory, it tended to construct this tension as a binary – between Indigenous ‘truth’ and a colonial ‘cover-up’ – thereby encouraging a dichotomous, oppositional reading of history (Ware 2004: 123). The memorial also failed to challenge the binary identity categories – Indigenous / non-Indigenous – which will need to be problematised if any effective form of ‘reconciliation’ is to be achieved (Bignall 2007).

Second, by locating itself primarily within a kind of oppositional politics of negation and confrontation, the Trail unintentionally encouraged an attack-counter-attack mode of engagement, one which tends to promote defensiveness and resentment rather than new productive forms of social connection. As Jacobs notes, the Trail ‘succeeded less in its goal of producing a pathway to Reconciliation than in activating non-Aboriginal expressions of resentment’ (1998: 272). Defensiveness and resentment are located within a mode of being which Deleuze, following Nietzsche, calls ressentiment: ‘a type in which reactive forces [which ‘limit action’] prevail over active [which ‘produce a burst of creativity’]’ (Deleuze 1983: 111). Because of the defensive hostility it incited, five of the original installations which most directly challenged dominant versions of history were prevented from ever being installed (272). And more recently, following controversy regarding the ‘local’ authenticity of some of the pieces and of one of the Indigenous artists who collaborated on the project, the entire Trail was decommissioned. Some markers and items still remain, but the trail guide is no longer printed and distributed. Perhaps the memorial, by failing to problematise notions of authenticity and identity, and by remaining within the realm of confrontation and opposition, had its own obsolescence built in from the start.

As a form of critical deconstruction, then, minority-group memorials and memorial additions are an important first step in deterritorialising dominant memory, but they do not go far enough in terms of activating or affirming the productive and creative potentials of pure memory. Becoming visible and identifiable is not all that is required; we need both deconstruction and creative affirmation of another form of perception. As Parr suggests, ‘this would mean designing in a manner that transforms
how we experience, build and conceive the relation between traumatic memory and
the spaces we inhabit’ (2008: 140). Despite its limitations, the *Trail* provides some
good examples of the ways in which a memorial might begin to engage participants in
new ways of remembering. It gestured toward an affective, participatory engagement
with memory, connected to movement and urban terrains, and close-range rather then
long-distance perception. The *Anti-Memorial to Heroin Overdose* with which I began
this chapter provides another good example.

Like the *Trail*, the *Anti-Memorial* operated according to a logic of close-range vision.
Haptic and tactile, rather than purely visual, it was composed of a range of different
textures (paint, flowers, resin blocks), heights (the footpath, the resin blocks and the
planter boxes) and modes of expression (language, colour, memorabilia). The tributes
painted on the footpaths avoided the traditional structured language of
commemoration in favour of non-linear memories (‘When we were really little he
used to fly around the backyard saving the world’), socio-political observations (‘I am
tired of watching people judge kids like my son’), and adjectives without pronouns
(‘WONDERFUL’; ‘VIBRANT’; ‘FUNNY’; CARING’). The items embedded in the
resin plaques – objects which included: animal figurines; feathers; flowers; perfume
bottles; sunglasses; chocolate bar wrappers; cocktail umbrellas; and a musical score –
also avoided linear narratives and symbolisms in favour of disjointed memory-affects.
These items did not symbolise or stand in for something else, but expressed the sense
of memory itself, as a disorderly assemblage of partial recollections and traits.

The *Anti-Memorial*’s memory-affects confronted people in the midst of their everyday
movement through urban space. In order to read the messages, passers-by were forced
to momentarily halt their trajectory along the street and gather alongside others
looking downwards. In order to see the small items embedded in the resin plaques,
participants were forced to bend over or squat down. And in order to read the other
tributes, participants then had to traverse urban space: along Fitzroy Street with its
cafes and bars, into Gray Street, known for its street sex work, and across to the
Esplanade, with its weekend markets and bay views. The *Anti-Memorial* thus altered
and challenged the everyday movements and ‘scopic regimes’ (see: Falk 1997, Jay
1993) of St Kilda’s diverse pedestrians, inviting them to reflect (whether cognitively
or bodily) upon their own everyday engagement with urban space. Rather than telling
viewers exactly how to reflect on their relationship to memory and space, the memorial thus worked affectively: imbuing in the viewer a sense of what it might feel like to engage with memory, and with the lives of those being memorialised, in a spatially different way.

The *Anti-Memorial* was also designed to be not only temporary but temporal. That is, it was designed to render perceptible its own temporariness and duration. The poppies came into bloom and then died away, the resin plaques and planters were removed, the remaining stencilled red words slowly faded, and eventually, after about six months, the whole memorial disappeared. In this way the memorial drew attention to the shifting, ever-changing nature of history and memory, and the importance of not allowing overdose memory to become singularised or sedimented. It created, in other words, an imperative to continually problematise, re-think and re-engage with the issue of drug use, overdose and its memorialisation.

As with the *Trail*, however, some aspects of the *Anti-Memorial* limited its capacity to destratify and deterritorialise memory. For example, although the stenciled messages expressed non-linear narratives and adjectives, they nonetheless tended to be written from a particular subject-position: a brother, a mother, a friend, an “I”. This use of unified perspective operated to shift the memory back within the realm of personal recollection and nostalgia, and limited the extent to which it could express memory as a pure a-subjective force. And although the messages worked to multiply the range of ways in which the identity of the injecting drug using (IDU) body might be understood (as not simply a drug user but also a lover, a son, a friend, a caring or creative person), they did not go so far as to render the IDU a *multiplicity*. That is, they did not problematise and deterritorialise the idea of stratified identity or faciality so much as multiply it. In this sense, the memorial did not escape from the politics of identity. It multiplied the ways in which the IDU body could be understood in order to elevate the maligned identity category of the IDU to the position of an ideal identity category: from undeserving to deserving victim. As Bennett notes:

> co-opting the designation “victim” into a narrative of good and evil [in this way] foreclose[s] on the possibility of elaborating a description of traumatic experience that addresses either the moral ambiguities of lived experience or the inherent tension between the experience of sense memory and that of common memory (2005: 27).
It does not, therefore, problematise the very categories of deserving and undeserving, victim and perpetrator, good and evil, that produce the maligned body to begin with.

The Anti-Memorial’s flowering poppies also, I believe, detracted from its affective force. Although they did help to render perceptible its temporality, the main function of the poppies was symbolic and representational, rather than affective. The poppies work to represent, rather than affectively convey, the role of opium in heroin overdose. As such, they do not generate in the viewer any affective sense of what it might feel like to be a heroin-using body; they do not generate, for example, any sense of what it might feel like to desire heroin, to be categorised as a junkie, or to have a government launch a ‘war’ against you. They do not, in other words, inspire any sort of becoming-IDU in which the viewer might begin to get a glimpse of what it means to perceive the world as an IDU might perceive it. Instead they operate to signify particular objects and events: THE poppies used to make heroin; THE ‘remembrance’ poppies of Commonwealth World War I commemorations (and its reverberations with THE war on drugs); THE capacity for life and new growth after loss. Although flowers have the capacity to convey a direct, affective sense of this life and growth, their association with sites of memory has now become so ritualised as to render their affect more representational than affective in this sense.

Despite these shortcomings, however, the Anti-memorial has, I believe, gone further than most sites of counter-memory in developing alternatives to dominant forms of commemoration. Other examples of memorials which have, in various ways, successfully begun to deterritorialise dominant processes of commemoration include: the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial in Washington, USA; the Monument Against Fascism in Hamburg, Germany; and the Negative-Form memorial in Kassel, Germany.

Maya Lin’s Vietnam memorial offers a commemorative wall that is a somber black rather than a victorious white, and is embedded into the hillside rather than raised above it. It lists the names of the dead not in the usual alphabetical order, nor according to army rank, but in order of their death, with the first and last dead placed side-by-side in the centre. It avoids representing the war via statues of soldiers or
tanks, and avoids overcoding it with a particular narratives of suffering, heroism, or camaraderie.\textsuperscript{48}

Horst Hoheisel’s \textit{Negative-Form} memorial also offers us a striking alternative to the ascendant tendencies of dominant memorial structures. Commissioned to ‘restore’ a fountain which had been originally given to Kassel by a Jewish man, and which had later been destroyed by the Nazi’s, Hoheisel instead constructed an upside-down version of the fountain which he sunk it into the ground, such that its water now runs downward: invisible but audible to the passers-by who can stand above and look down into the darkness. As Hoheisel suggests, its visual absence encourages those ‘who stand upon it to search for the memorial in their own heads’ (1989, cited in Young 1999: 1). Rather than rely entirely on this visual absence, the memorial also taps into the affective capacity of sound in order to render perceptible the deterritorialised capacity of pure memory.

The \textit{Monument Against Fascism}, designed by Jochen Gerz and Ester Shalev-Gerz, provides yet another example of a sunken-form memorial. The memorial began its life as a 12 metre tall lead-covered pillar, into which passers-by were encouraged to inscribe their names. As the pillar filled up with names and messages, it was gradually lowered into the ground until it was only visible through a small window in the adjacent staircase. Through its soft, tactile and interactive form, it worked to render perceptible the pliable multiple and ongoing nature of history and memory-work. Like the Negative-Form memorial, its very ‘disappearance’ helped to render perceptible the fact that: ‘In the end, it is only we ourselves who can rise up against injustice’.\textsuperscript{49} In leaving itself open to participatory inscriptions, the \textit{Monument Against Fascism} also enabled all sorts of unpredictable messages and counter-messages to be inscribed on its surface, including neo-Nazi slogans and tributes. By refusing to counter these expressions of fascism (the slogans) with an act of fascism (their removal or covering-over), the memorial activated an ethico-aesthetics of non-fascism: a mode of being that is open rather than closed.

[48] Although, after public protests regarding the memorial, and calls for a ‘real memorial’ to be created, two inscriptions were later added to the wall (Edkins 2003: 90-91), and a US flag and a statue of three soldiers was installed nearby (Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991: 395-6).

[49] Inscription on the plaque at the site of the monument.
Like the *Anti-memorial*, these counter-monuments are effective because they move away from simply representing or making-visible a minority or a minority group perspective on memory, and toward *minoritarianising* memory itself. Rather than representing or symbolising a different group or memory, they begin to actually activate a different mode of remembrance. They do so to the extent that they generate an affect which bypasses Cartesian visuality and cognitive reason: an affect that works by making *sense*-able rather than making knowable or *sensible*. In order to effect change, a memorial needs to disturb our sense of memory, space, identity and self; it needs to activate a becoming-other which deterritorialises current socio-spatial relations. As Sennett asks, ‘without a disturbed sense of ourselves, what will prompt most of us… to turn outward toward each other, to experience the Other?’ (cited in Diamond 2004: 32).

These counter-memorials are also good because they tend to avoid controlling, or determining in advance, what sorts of memories and social relations they will produce. For example, rather than attempting to lead to specific, pre-determined social outcomes, these memorials gesture toward a future mode of being which affirms openness, differentiation and a healthy level of chaotic indetermination. Rather than teach specific memorial lessons, these memorials affirm a pedagogy of affect, which seeks to engender *embodied* changes rather than didactically instruct viewers on how to change and why. And rather than decoding memory only to overcode it all over again (with a new alternative social message or narrative), these memorials begin to affirm the very unpredictability of memory as it connects to the present and the future. It is these traits which I will now explore in greater depth in order to develop a stronger conceptual basis for developing future sites of overdose memory: for developing, more specifically, sites which might raise the profile of injecting drug using bodies without stratifying them, and which might enable new, unpredictable connections between social bodies.
Nomad Memory

What is lacking is a Nomadology, the opposite of a history (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 23).

The example of the nomad is given by Deleuze and Guattari as a conceptual model for the kinds of movements – or ways-of-being-in-the-world – which constitute processes of smooth, minoritarian deterritorialisation. Nomads here are defined not by their extensive or physical movements, but by their intensive movement: their virtual capacity for movement even when standing still; their capacity ‘to occupy and hold a smooth space’ (1987: 410). ‘The nomadic adventure begins’, Deleuze writes, when one moves intensively, ‘by escaping the codes’ (2004: 260). By refusing to lay out a territory or home – by eschewing roots and foundations – nomads increase their range of potential for movement.

Nomadic movement involves trajectories and lines of flight that are not defined by a destination, any more than they are by an origin. What defines the nomad is a way of being-in-the-world, which involves making a map rather than a tracing, creating new lines of flight rather than representing or reproducing existing ones, and occupying and distribute smooth spaces rather than striated. Deleuze and Guattari write:

The nomads are there, on the land, wherever there forms a smooth space that gnaws, and tends to grow, in all directions... they are vectors of deterritorialisation... [moving] by a series of local operations whose orientation and direction endlessly vary (1987: 382).

Nomads do not seek to represent or lay claim to a minority-identity, but are minoritarian to the extent that they seek to engender minoritarian modes of moving and becoming. As a minoritarian force, nomadism ‘opens a space in the grid of identities... inventing new trajectories, new circuits of response, unheard-of futures and possible bodies such as have never been seen before’ (Massumi 1992: 101).

Nomadic modes of existence are ‘antimemory’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 294), but only in the sense that they do not rely on memory to provide a familiar, stratified, homely refrain. Instead, nomadic forms of becoming have an affinity with the flow of pure, virtual memory, as it launches forth into the future, toward ‘a people to come’
Rather than produce histories with linear narratives, hierarchies, dates, subjects and identities, a nomadic type of memory produces what Deleuze and Guattari call a plane of consistency. The consistency of this plane emerges neither from order nor homogeneity, but rather from its smooth, chaotic, disordered heterogeneity. They write:

the plane of consistency knows nothing of substance and form…
Inscribed on the plane of consistency are *haecceities*, events, incorporeal transformations that are apprehended in themselves; *nomadic essences*, vague yet rigorous; *continuums of intensities* or continuous variations, that go beyond constants and variables; *becomings*, which have neither culmination nor subject, but draw one another into zones of proximity or undecidability; [and] *smooth spaces*, composed from within striated space’ (1987: 507).

Deleuze and Guattari use the term ‘haecceities’ here to designate all those expressive individuations, intensities and singularities which do not belong to, or designate, a subject or proper noun:

There is a mode of individuation very different from that of a person, subject, thing, or substance. We reserve the name *haecceity* for it. A season, a winter, a summer, an hour, a date have a perfect individuality lacking nothing, even though this individuality is different from that of a thing or a subject. They are haecceities in the sense that they consist entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules or particles, capacities to affect and be affected (1987: 261).

The blue in Van Gogh’s irises; the shrill sound of chalk scraping down a black-board; the particular way a cat’s whiskers move forward as it yawns: these are haecceities. These are not, for Deleuze and Guattari, part-objects which refer to or symbolise something else. They may trigger memories and sensations, but they do not seek to represent them. They are ‘modes of individuation proceeding neither by form nor by the subject’ (1987: 507). Their power therefore lies at the level of *affect*, at the non-conscious level of a sensation which is ‘felt’ by the body below the threshold of cognitive thought or emotion. These affects give rise to changes in the sensing body: its temperature, pulse and movements; its future capacity for affecting and being affected. Yet haecceities and their affects are not goal directed; they are *expressive*, rather than communicative. They do not attempt to communicate a particular knowledge or meaning, nor do they represent or stand in for something else. As
Deleuze and Guattari suggest: ‘a matter of expression is never a vestige or a symbol… nor a transitional or part-object. It is an operator, a vector… an *assemblage converter*’ (324-5).

Bennett (2002) refers to these types of memorial engagements as encounters with ‘sense memory’. The power of sense-memory, for Bennett, ‘does not turn on its capacity to signify or to represent or… to communicate meaning’ (18), but instead emerges from ‘its capacity to sustain sensation’ (18). She writes:

> by extracting affect from narrative, or by isolating the embodied sensation from character, affective imagery promotes a form of thought that arises from the body, that explores the nature of our affective investment, and that ultimately has the potential to take us outside the confines of our character and habitual modes of perception (2005: 44).

Sense memory is created not by constructing a story, an interpretation or a symbolic representation, but by composing what Deleuze and Guattari call a *bloc of sensations* – or ‘a compound of percepts and affects’ (1994: 163-99) – in connection with memory. Here:

> percepts are no longer perceptions; they are independent of those who experience them… [and] affects are no longer feelings or affections; they go beyond the strength of those who undergo them… Sensations, percepts, and affects are *beings* whose validity lies in themselves (164).

A bloc of sensation is composed of hæcceities and intensities; it produces becomings rather than states of being. Activating sense memory in a site of remembrance, then, is not simply a matter of being unusual or different, nor is it simply about using other sensory modes of engagement besides the visible. Deleuze and Guattari write:

> We are not at all arguing for an aesthetics of qualities, as if the pure quality (color, sound, etc.) held the secret of a becoming without measure… Pure qualities still seem to us to be punctual systems: They are reminiscences, they are either transcendent or floating memories or seeds of phantasy. A functionalist conception the other hand, only considers the function a quality fulfils in a specific assemblage, or in passing from one assemblage to another. The quality must be considered from the standpoint of the becoming that grasps it, instead of becoming being considered from the standpoint of intrinsic qualities having the value of archetypes or phylogenetic memories (1987: 306).
It is not enough, in other words, to simply compose a memorial out of sound, or colour, in order for it to activate sense-memory; a sound or colour can just as easily be a representation, symbolising a particular transcendent memory or fantasy. Instead, one must compose a bloc of a-subjective, non-representational sensation: a bloc of affect that does not produce a meaning or truth but a movement – however large or small – of becoming.

Working nomadically with sense-memory and affect is therefore very different to *communicating*, in the linguistic, cognitive, pedagogical sense. It is also very different to working within the field of representation and symbolism. Nomadic art does not involve composing recognisable ‘things’ (crosses, flowers, ‘reflecting pools’, teddy-bears), but generating forces and intensities. It is not, for example, a matter of painting ‘things’, but painting ‘between things’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 298) where ‘the essential thing is no longer forms and matters, or themes, but forces, densities, intensities’ (343). Referring to nomadic art as a kind of ‘monument’, Deleuze and Guattari write:

> here the monument is not something commemorating a past, it is a bloc of present sensations that owe their preservation only to themselves and that provide the event with the compound that celebrates it. The monument’s action is not memory but fabulation. We write not with childhood memories but through blocs of childhood that are the becoming-child of the present (1994: 167-8).

Here Deleuze and Guattari contrast the action of stratified memory, as a kind of introspective repetition of the same, with that of ‘fabulation’, as an experimental production of that which is new, unexpected, deterrioralising and monstrous. Nomadic monuments do not commemorate a fixed past, but activate the creative potentiality of a past-in-general as it comes into contact with the present and presses upon the future. They do not, in other words, represent stratified memory (‘childhood memories’, war memories, injecting drug user memories, and so on), but instead seek to launch dynamic new encounters with memory: with ‘becomings-child’, becomings-war, becomings-IDU. This is because rather than work with personal, contemplative emotion, they mobilise a kind of impersonal, a-subjective, ‘creative emotion’ (Deleuze 1988c:111). This creative emotion, writes Deleuze,
no longer has to do with the pressures of society, nor with the disputes of the individual… nor with a society that constrains, that persuades or even tells stories… And what is this creative emotion, if not precisely a cosmic Memory… [which] traces the design of an open society, a society of creators (111).

Rather than simply deconstructing or opposing existing, recognisable forms of memory, nomadic forms of creative emotion work to create new forms of memory, and in doing so, fashion new modes of being in the world. Rather than ‘focusing on problems of identity, or Being’ they move ‘toward the more ethical problematic of “how can we become other than the traumatic conditions thus far defining us?”’ (Parr 2008: 136). And rather than trying to teach an audience what to think or do, based on a pre-determined moral framework, they seek to shift how people are able think or perceive or act. They work, more specifically, to expand the range of ways in which bodies are capable of thinking, perceiving and interacting, increasing their potential for affecting and being affected.

A good example of an indeterminate, nomadic line of flight taken in relation to remembrance, is provided by Parr (2008: 112-127) in her discussion of a small Amish community’s unusual response to the 2006 mass-murder-suicide shooting in which five of their schoolgirls died. Instead of demanding public recognition of their grief, reciting eulogies for the girls who died, leaving memorabilia at the site of their deaths, or developing plans for a permanent memorial, the Amish community grieved quietly, humbly and peacefully, away from the media spotlight. Rather than showing anger, laying blame, or making moral judgments, the Amish community were forgiving, thoughtful and generous. They offered empathy, for example, to the family of the man responsible, grieving alongside them at his funeral, and setting up a support fund for them at the local bank. They also supported one another in grief by helping with small chores such as cooking and raking leaves. As Parr suggests, by enacting these alternative ways of mourning, remembering and being, the Amish community implicitly undermined dominant binaries such as those of victim and perpetrator, innocence and guilt, life and death. But rather than simply deconstruct these binaries, they created and enacted new modes of thinking, remembering and relating. Parr notes:
the Amish didn’t monumentalise what happened… they involved the community in their own incorporeal transformation by forming a block of forgiveness… [they] did not build a structure to remember the dead by… what they did was to embrace the future and life as a way of remembering (123).

Instead of falling back on recognisable, stratified forms of memory to reproduce and reinforce stratified, territorialised ways of being, the Amish community treated grief as an opportunity to create and affirm a transformative ethics of being. Instead of reproducing the very kinds of stratified, oppositional blocks of being and resentment which make traumatic events such as this shooting more likely to occur, they affirmed a mode of existence which in its very enactment works to dissolve these blockages and create new lines of connection. This kind of ethics as a way of being in the world, is very different to a moral framework with which to guide or judge the world. It does not plan for a set end-point, but instead creates a way of being that increases, rather than decreases, bodily socio-spatial capacities.

But how might a public memorial installation – as a spatialised site of memory – produce this kind of indeterminate ethics-of-being-in-the-world without becoming completely disconnected from the specificity of the particular memory it has been set up to engage with? How, for example, might a public overdose memorial actually move away from representation, narrative, recognisability, symbolism and moral frameworks, without becoming simply a site-in-general with no link to memory or overdose or injecting drug use at all?

The answer, I suggest, lies in thinking of a memorial as a kind of nomadic refrain, one which is composed of memory-rhythms, rather than memory as a fixed tempo or beat, and which produces memory-milieus rather than a memorial territory. ‘Every milieu’ Deleuze and Guattari write, ‘is vibratory… Rhythm is the milieus’ answer to chaos. What chaos and rhythm have in common is the in-between… In this in-between, chaos becomes rhythm’ (1987: 313). A memorial as rhythmic milieu would resonate in and through the specificity of memory or trauma, but in such a way that would refuse to overcode and territorialise that memory. It is not, as Bennett (2005: 31) suggests, about eluding the inside (of memory and trauma), but about ensuring that this inside is placed in connection with an outside (of virtual potentiality). This
involves, ‘not so much speaking of but speaking out of a particular memory or experience – in other words, speaking from the body sustaining sensation’ (38). It entails, in other words, drawing out the specific sensations and intensities a particular memory produces and providing these with an affective plane of immanence on which to vibrate and resonate. This is what Deleuze means, I believe, when he talks about ‘creative emotion’, or ‘creating in conformity’ with emotion (1988c: 111-112).

Nicolas Low’s 2006 temporary art installation in Melbourne, entitled Clean, provides a great example of the ways in which a memorial might engage nomadically with the creative, affective ‘sense’ of a particular memory, without territorialising it along familiar stratified categories of identity, representation, symbolism and morality. Clean was developed as a direct response to local and State government attempts to ‘clean-up’ Melbourne in preparation for the 2006 Commonwealth Games. It was composed of two primary elements: a wallpaper image of games athletes surrounded by street sweepers, brooms, dusters, and paint rollers, which was pasted up onto laneway walls (see Figures 8 and 9), and a series of movement-triggered speakers playing random sound-bytes from official games rhetoric and marketing, music, cleaning product advertisements and interviews with the city’s minoritarian populations (see Figure 10). Combined, these elements aimed to affectively return to urban space all the minorities (injecting drug users, homeless people, Indigenous peoples, beggars, skateboarders and sex workers) who were being dislocated from the city centre as part of the ‘clean up’, and to render-perceptible these processes of urban erasure and their impact upon social space and social relations.

Clean was installed for two weeks (coinciding with the Games) along two adjacent popular city laneways called Hosier and Rutledge Lane. These lanes are well known for their impressive range of stencil graffiti art and for their popular ‘City Lights’ light-box art installations. The intersection of the two lanes is also home to the Footpatrol Needle and Syringe Program offices, as well as the Living Room Primary Health Service which is set up for marginalised people in the city, including homeless people, drug users and sex workers. The area’s grimy cobblestones, rubbish bins, coloured milk crates, and general edginess, provide a dramatic contrast to the adjacent, up-market (and very clean) Federation Square, where a large proportion of the Commonwealth Games cultural festivities were taking place. Yet Hosier and
Rutledge Lanes are also home to an expensive tapas restaurant, a hip bar, a gallery and several offices and residential apartments, making them a popular thoroughfare for a wide range of people. *Clean* was thus designed so that it was not dependent on people coming specifically to visit it (although many did) but instead operated to confront everyday people going about their everyday life.

Despite the visual impact of its wallpaper, *Clean*’s inconspicuous speakers operated as a kind of audio ambush, surprising people as they passed by. Some sound-bytes operated as general commentary, filling the space of the laneway with abstract comments such as: ‘Sparkling white!’ (from a television advertisement); ‘We’re going to tidy up the city!’; ‘Looking its very best for the international visitors’ (from Melbourne’s 1956 Olympic Games Commentary); and ‘I think they should have a refuge, or something, for the young people to stay in and that.’ (from an interview with a woman in Melbourne). Others operated as interpellations, directly addressing passers-by with invisible approaches such as: (a male voice) ‘G’day mate… hey!… hey, hey!… You haven’t got a couple of dollars have ya?”; (male voice whispering) ‘Hey… hey, over here… come over here mate’; (female voice) ‘Hey, hey, excuse me’; (male voice) ‘No, no, over here… no, over here guys’; and (male voice) ‘hey, come back here mate!’. Such interpellations worked to directly implicate passers-by in the installation, often startling them and making them look around for the ‘person’ addressing them. One pedestrian I saw, after looking around and spotting the speaker, even responded to the virtual beggar by saying out-loud: ‘Na, mate, I’ve only got a ten-er’.

Triggered by their very movements through space, *Clean* rendered passers-by a direct and explicit part of the installation, and part of the process of bringing minority bodies back into urban space. *Clean* deterritorialised and disturbed people’s motion – disrupting their trajectories from one place to another (work, Games Festival, shops), but also their sense of personal autonomy and bodily unity: their sense of ‘security’. *Clean* broke with the city soundscape, deterritorialising the happy refrains of footsteps and A-to-B trajectories and department store jingles. It created affects which bypassed cognition and entered straight into the body. Its strength lay not in its meaning or signification but in its bodily affect on passers-by; it affected their movements and postures and trajectories, forcing them to interact with the city space in a new way.
By operating primarily through sound, rather than visual stimuli, *Clean* managed – more successfully than many installations and memorials – to engage directly with the body: with bodily affect. As Deleuze and Guattari note, ‘sound invades us, impels us, drags us, transpierces us… its force of deterritorialisation is the strongest’ (1987: 348). The body reacts and feels the force of the sound (a ‘gut’ feeling) before the brain comprehends it: before it is transformed into stratified words or emotions. Sounds can succeed in ‘making audible forces that are not audible in themselves’ (Deleuze 2006: 160): the force, for example, of an absence (the absence of those who have been swept away or who have died); of the virtual (the bodily relations folded into the walls, the milk-crates, the curb); or of the potentiality of the urban encounter (as a future bodily relation). They have the capacity, therefore, to generate new, unpredictable modes of being and relating.

Although the sounds being emitted by *Clean* mainly comprised individuals’ voices, these voices were faceless, disembodied and de-subjectified. They came from the walls, the cobblestones, the milk crates. The voices that spoke were not so much those of *this* man, *this* woman: but of hæcceities: a man, a woman, a child, an advertisement. And as Deleuze and Guattari note, ‘the voice is [already] far ahead of the face, very far ahead’ in terms of its deterritorialising capacity, in terms of its ability to break away from the facialised forms of subjectivity and representation that pervade us (1987: 302). Reverberating through the lane from different directions and at different speeds, pitches, volumes and intensities, overlapping and bouncing off one another, the de-subjectified voices of *Clean* produced a kind of ‘rhythmic sound block’ (303): a refrain both discordant and musical.

‘Musicians’, Deleuze and Guattari suggest:

> have always proceeded in this way: drawing their own diagonal, however fragile, outside points, outside coordinates and localisable connections, in order to float a sound block down a created liberated line, in order to unleash in space this mobile and mutant sound block, a hæcceity (1987: 297).

Such hæcceities do not signify or represent something (as language does), but carry with them an affective force: a rhythmic, minoritarian force of becoming: becoming-
animal, becoming-molecular. Music, Deleuze and Guattari write, ‘is pervaded by every minority, and... composes an immense power. Children’s, women’s, ethnic, and territorial refrains, refrains of love and destruction: the birth of rhythm’ (300). They add:

it is necessary for the nonmusical sound of the human being to form a block with the becoming-music of sound, for them to confront and embrace each other like two wrestlers... “Let the choirs represent the survivors... faintly one hears the sound of cicadas. Then the notes of a lark, followed by a mockingbird. Someone laughs... A woman sobs... From a male a great shout: WE ARE LOST! A woman’s voice: WE ARE SAVED! Staccato cries: Lost! Saved! Lost! Saved!” (309).

Rather than monumentalise or even memorialise the minoritarian bodies being removed from urban space, Clean created its own minoritarian movement of becoming: inventing new modes of hearing, moving, seeing and relating. In this sense it went further than both the Trail and the Anti-Memorial in affirming the nomadic potentials of memory. In doing so, it also provided – at least in some sense – a kind of comforting refrain for those who may have felt themselves increasingly excluded from city space. As such, although not a memorial in the traditional sense, I believe it provides a great model for future urban overdose memorial installations. This does not mean we should imitate, re-create or even adapt Clean to suit such purposes. What it suggests, rather, is the need to always go beyond representing or making-visible a minority, or simply opposing a current version of memory or history, and to instead begin to invent new ways of being in and through urban space. It shows us what it might feel like to compose a memorial refrain as a rhythmic milieu: whether through blocks of sound, or smell or taste or touch; or through monstrous new sensory combinations. And it reminds us that we need to do more than simply avoid linear narratives, hierarchies, whole forms, long-distance vision, symbolisms, representations, and moral judgments or lessons, if we are to enact and affirm the creative, affective potentials of nomadic memory.
An Ethico-Aesthetics of Memory

A monument does not commemorate or celebrate something that happened but confides in the ear of the future the persistent sensations that embody the event... the success of a revolution resides only in itself, precisely in the vibrations, clinches, and openings it gave to men and women at the moment of its making and that composes in itself a monument that is always in the process of becoming, like those tumuli to which each traveller adds a stone. The victory of a revolution is immanent and consists in the new bonds it installs between people (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 176-7).

Within the sensory landscape of the city, overdose memorial refrains – whether in song, poem, or the drawing of a cross into the earth – have the capacity to establish new connections between injecting drug users, urban space and passers-by. By marking out the relations between intensive memories (a grief, a sorrow, a fear) and extensive memories (a drug using body, an alcove, a laneway, a passer-by), a public memorial can shift the ways in which not only injecting drug use, but also city space, social identity and memory are understood and embodied. But what form should future memorials take, if they are to engender these corporeal shifts whilst taking care not to inadvertently support existing social binaries and divisions?

The National Overdose Awareness Day which currently dominates public overdose memory in Australia, has been a useful way of both mourning those who have died and drawing political attention to the plight of those who inject drugs. However it operates primarily within the realm of reason, depending too much on the rational capacity of its audience to recognise and sympathise with this plight. It does little to actually affect new ways of perceiving, or relating to, those who inject. It does little, in other words, to defamiliarise, challenge and re-generate corporeal socio-spatial relations. Instead, it relies upon stratified forms of remembrance (repeating ritual movements, producing familiar imagery and reciting familiar speeches and eulogies), and reinstates stratified forms of subjectivity and identity (IDU, service provider, politician, family member, friend, and so on). In doing so, it inadvertently works to reproduce the very social stratifications that those who injecting drug are attempting to dismantle in the first place.
The idea of planting a commemorative overdose tree in Melbourne is also problematic. A tree’s primary function would be symbolic rather than affective; it would stand in for and represent life, regeneration and growth, rather than affect a bodily sensation of such forces. A tree also testifies to a linear, hierarchical and transcendental sense of history, subjectivity, and life – with its vertical form, its grounded roots, its single trunk and its branches stretching to the heavens. ‘The tree’, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, ‘imposes the verb “to be”, [whereas] the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, “and…and…and…” [which] carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb “to be”’ (1987: 25).

Ware’s *Anti-Memorial* provides one of the best examples in Melbourne of an alternative mode of public overdose remembrance, one which might challenge not only dominant views of injecting drug use, but also dominant modes of memorialisation. The *Anti-Memorial* sought not only to reinscribe IDU bodies in urban space, but to render them multiple: to begin to perceive the IDU body as an ‘and… and… and…’ rather than a striated ‘to be’. It sought not to simply provide a space for mourning and grieving those who have died, but to actively deterritorialise the very processes of space-making and memory-making which stratify IDU bodies to begin with.

The spontaneous graffiti overdose memorials and other IDU inscriptions that occasionally mark city space also provide a good example of the nomadic, deterritorialising potentials of overdose memory. These unexpected refrains disturb the ways in which city space is encountered and experienced: affecting not only how bodies move through space (their trajectories, speeds, postures, expressions), but also the ways in which they feel in relation to one another. Despite their potential for repeating territorialised forms of memory, the very unauthorised nature of their presence offers a kind of disruption – or deterritorialisation – to the linearity, orderly, striations of everyday urban space. And despite their inability to reach a wide audience, they give the city a qualitative depth: connecting it to both its largely invisible, minoritarian ‘inside’, as well as to a chaotic, virtual ‘outside’. It is this outside which provides the possibility of forging new, not-yet imagined forms of subjectivity and social relations.
An overdose memorial, therefore, needs to go beyond simply making IDU bodies visible and valuable, or simply attempting to teach a particular lesson in humanity. It needs instead to activate and affirm the virtual – through affect – in such a way that it can engender a new manner of seeing, a new mode of thinking: in short, new forms of being-in-the-world. To do so, it also needs to be dynamic, such that it either changes over time, or disappears in order to be replaced or regenerated elsewhere. For the longer a nomadic memorial stands still, the more likely its smooth spaces will become striated, its unexpectedness will become familiar, and its capacity to disturb will become diminished. It also needs to ensure that it doesn’t deterritorialise memory and space so fast or so extremely that it becomes a threat to the socius and to itself.

Following trauma or loss, those who are grieving need some form of memorial refrain, something that can comfort and soothe and provide a rhythm to their chaos. A memorial that becomes completely nomadic – a pure BwO of virtual memory – risks alienating those in need of a rhythmic refrain, and through this, risks its own demise. One solution is to find a balance between the refrain on the one hand, and the opening that it makes onto the outside: onto the space of an unknown and unknowable future.

As Lorraine suggests:

> Individuals of all sorts need to sustain their power to affect and be affected. This requires maintaining patterns of self-regulation. But in addition to creating a space that allows one to sustain the comforting rhythms of familiar places, one must also be able to confront the new… to withstand the novel rhythms of life that always encroach, one must be able to improvise new refrains that bear some relationship to old rhythms (2005: 162).

Rather than planting an Overdose Memorial Tree, therefore, or repeating the rituals of Overdose Awareness Day with its ceremonies and commemorative badges, I suggest that we take the examples of the Anti-Memorial and the spontaneous graffiti memorials, along with the Trail and Clean, as starting points from which to begin thinking of more nomadic ways of affirming the potentials of overdose memory. Perhaps we should consider handing out a collection of spray cans to the city’s IDUs and encouraging them to reclaim urban space with random acts of memory-inscription. It would certainly make the city a more interesting place. It would also, however, almost certainly be met with a great deal of political, commercial and public resistance. Perhaps instead we could each year raise money to commission a new
temporary laneway memorial installation: designed by IDUs and the families of those who have died in conjunction with artists and in connection to a nomadically-oriented curatorial brief. Each year the design and location would be a surprise, something which people moving through city space, visiting its many laneway bars and restaurants and galleries, might just stumble across and be disturbed by.

But how might we contend with the unpredictability of these nomadic forms of art and memory? ‘How is it possible’, as Grosz asks, ‘to revel and delight in the indeterminacy of the future without raising the kind of panic and defensive counterreactions that surround the attempts of the old to contain the new, to predict, anticipate, and incorporate the new within its already existing frameworks?’ (1999: 16). Certainly, an ethico-aesthetics of creativity comes with various dangers. You cannot know in advance, for example, where a nomadic creation may lead and exactly what it will produce. Those who are disturbed by an overdose memorial, for example, will not necessarily change their relations with IDUs, nor will they necessarily work to improve IDU policies or practices. But what such disturbances do is open up the possibility for such shifts. By engendering a-conscious, imperceptible shifts in bodily movements and modes of perception, they have to potential to open up a space for transformation of the ways in which both injecting drug use and memory itself can be perceived. Rather than try to teach a moral message, produce reasoned reflexivity, or generate ‘sympathy’ for an IDU ‘other’ who is shown to be ‘human’ like us, these openings have the potential to activate a generalised ethics of being-in-the-world: one which affirms and celebrates difference in and of itself. Bennett refers to this as the production of an ‘empathic vision’: an empathy that emerges not as a humanist sympathy for the ‘other’ through sameness, but as a sense of collective responsibility which emerged through an encounter with the irreducible difference of others (2005: 8, 10, 20). Yet in a nomadic memorial, even this kind of empathic vision cannot be guaranteed. The only thing you can know for sure is that you have provided an opening: you have opened something up – however briefly – and in doing so, you have made a different present-future possible: you have affirmed the possibility of new relations and the virtual potentiality of memory.

However there is still one final danger to contend with: that of contemporary capitalism, which has a tendency to harness the affective energies of trauma and
memory in order to translate them into profit. The media and film industries, for example, tend to capitalise on the desiring potentials of memory, with large-scale traumatic events such as the Holocaust and 9/11 providing notable cases in point (Parr 2008: 11). Many large public memorial sites have also become lucrative tourist sites: charging entry fees, conducting tours, selling food and beverages, and offering kitsch memorabilia in the forms of books, t-shirts, badges and trinkets (Edkins 2003: 165; Knauer and Walkowitz 2004: 13; Parr 2008: 170). Again, sites of Holocaust and 9/11 memory, such the US Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, and Ground Zero in New York city, provide good cases in point. At the USHMM, for example, there is a gift-shop where visitors can purchase ‘remembrance pendants’, books and teddy-bears modeled on a Holocaust artifact. And at Ground Zero, in the years following 9/11, many local businesses and entrepreneurs began to capitalise on the influx of visitors coming to witness the site, and – more specifically – began to capitalise on the desire of these visitors to ‘bear witness’ by taking home some part of the event in the form of tourist memorabilia (Engle 2007: 78). On offer were items such memorial badges, t-shirts and coffee mugs with corny slogans, and keyrings of the previously standing Twin Towers (78). As Parr observes, ‘there is a lot of money to be made out of the social fascination with trauma’ (2008: 168). Such forms of commodification not only trivialise memory, but also bolster simplistic forms of remembrance, tied to nationalism, nostalgia, belonging and homogeneity. As Engle suggests, referring to the kitsch memorabilia sold at Ground Zero:

kitsch refers to far more than simply the mass production of cheap trinkets; it designates a dangerous political sentimentality... [it] enables the statement of universal community and belonging. This is the danger: the erasure of difference, the reduction of distance and the non-recognition of the Other all have as their unspoken desire the dream, of homogeneity and absolute power... Out of this mass identification with and internalisation of the event, violent borderlines between patriot and enemy are drawn (78).

The ways in which such forms of capitalism and commodification might come to impact upon any future overdose memorials, and their capacity to engender new socio-spatial relations, therefore needs to be considered. What would happen, for example, if it was a local business giving spray cans to IDUs and commissioning them

50 see: http://web.ushmm.org/site/apps/ka/ec/category.asp?c=ftILIlPMKoAndb=2264499anden=atJLXNDj9KSK7NGI8KOK9MXLJXJ60OKdQIlbNRKkJVLeP2H
to inscribe their memories into urban space? If an annual urban memorial art project came to be funded or sponsored by a major corporation? Or if overdose memorabilia came to be sold at the openings? How would the influences of capitalism affect the nomadic potentials of overdose memory, and the capacities of IDU bodies more generally?

In Chapter 5, I will begin to develop a way of thinking through such questions by examining in more detail how capitalism \textit{works}. Focusing on the use of the injecting drug using body within advertising imagery, I will explore the relationships between capitalism, desire and trauma, and the implications of these relationships for IDU bodies and for the revolutionary potentials of nomadic forms of art. I explore, in other words, what contemporary forms of advertising, commodification and consumption might mean for an ethico-aesthetic future.
5
The Art of Capitalism

In 2002, Dior released a new perfume called *Addict*. Advertisements for the perfume, placed in magazines as well as on tram and bus-shelters around Melbourne, featured a glossy image of a sweat-drenched, nearly-naked young woman (see Figure 11). The woman’s body is contorted: her eyes almost closed; her teeth clenched. Her bra is pushed up over a breast to almost expose a nipple and her outstretched hand pulls at the side of her underpants. She has her head turned toward the steamed-up glass beside her, and an expression of pained longing looks back toward the viewer from the reflective surface. To the centre-left of the advertisement is the partly-obscured word ‘Dior’ (which, given its context, is at first glance highly suggestive of the word ‘drug’), followed, in the centre of the advertisement and written in red across the woman’s chest, by the word ‘Addict’. And in the bottom right of the image, beside a picture of a perfume bottle, are the words: ‘Admit it’.

Similar imagery appeared on the Dior website (www.dior.com), which also directed viewers to a short advertising film sequence (Dior 2002). Set to a soundtrack of techno beats, the film depicts the woman being chased by police sirens through a city at night. The woman runs along rain-drenched cobblestone streets to a back alleyway where, panting and desperate, she leans up against a wall, reaches into her coat for a perfume bottle and, as the music reaches a crescendo, sprays a fine mist of perfume on her chest and throat. Immediately panic gives way to calm: her breathing slows, the music softens and she rests her head back against the wall. She has had her ‘fix’.

Like the drug-referenced ‘heroin chic’ fashion advertisements which became popular in the 1990s, these contemporary perfume advertisements draw on an aesthetic of drug use to generate interest in, and value for, consumer goods. In the 1990s, the fashion industry was widely condemned for ‘glamourising’ and promoting drug use, ‘exploiting’ disenfranchised drug users, and making light of ‘the serious issue’ of addiction. Such was the level of concern that then US president, Bill Clinton, made a speech in which he condemned heroin chic advertisements as dangerous because they
‘made heroin addiction seem glamorous and sexy and cool’ (cited in Ashton 2002: 14). A decade later, Dior’s *Addict* has generated similar (albeit less vociferous and high-profile) responses, with one anti-drug lobby group in the United States, *Faces and Voices of Recovery* (FVR), arguing that the perfume promotion ‘glorifies addiction’, ‘exploits a brain disease’, ‘trivialises the critical public health issue of alcohol and other drug addiction’, and ‘cheapens the hard work of recovery’ (FVR 2002). According to at least one campaign advocate, ‘there is nothing sexy, pleasurable, attractive or alluring about this exploitation!’ (2002).

Yet surely there is. Surely it is the sublime, libidinous, abject pleasures circulating through and around the drug-using body that make perfumes such as Dior’s *Addict*, Yves Saint Laurent’s *Opium* (see Figure 12) and Gucci’s *Rush* (Figure 13) so very appealing (see for example: Lupton 1999: 147-9, 168). And surely it is this same desiring potential which made the 1990’s ‘heroin chic’ fashion photographs – such as those by Corinne Day (Figures 14 and 15), Mario Sorrenti (Figure 16) and Paolo Roversi (Figure 17) – so very alluring and ‘chic’. But how is it that the drug-using body, a body so abjected, stratified in everyday life, can be rendered so productive, so sale-able, in these advertising assemblages? What can these assemblages tell us about art and capitalism, and about the relationships between art, capitalism and ethics? Most importantly, what implications do these assemblages have for minoritarian bodies and their relations with others?

Most academic commentary on drug-referenced or ‘heroin chic’ imagery has, like the public commentary, been negative. Here, the focus has tended to shift from concerns about the potential of such images to encourage drug use or anorexia, to concerns about their potential to produce offensive, middle-class imitations and appropriations of lower class poverty, suffering and drug use (see for example: Giroux 2000 and Halnon 2002). What tends to be left out in both analyses, as Harold (1999) notes, are the potential becomings which take place in-between drug user and consumer: becomings which constitute neither an imitation or appropriation of drug use nor an actual use of drugs, but a transformational trajectory between the two. As Deleuze and Guattari suggest:
We fall into a false alternative if we say that you either imitate or you are. What is real is the becoming itself, the block of becoming… a block that runs its own line “between” the terms in play and beneath assignable relations (1987: 238-9).

It is the promise of these becomings – the promise of being able to consume the desire-flows of drug-use without actually consuming drugs: to get ‘drunk… on pure water’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 285) – which gives drug-referenced advertising its appeal. The force of any such advertising image, as Eng, drawing on Guattari, suggests, ‘comes about less from the desire it produces in me to possess the commodity than… from the desire it produces in me to become the fragmented body it displays’ (2004: 11). And as Fitzgerald (2002b) has noted, references to drugs in advertisements do not rely on consumers identifying with the drug object, practice or experience, but rather rely on their investment in the possibility of becoming-other: an investment in the possibility of sensing and perceiving in new ways; of experiencing chaos and vertigo; of connecting to the outside. Elsewhere, with Threadgold, he writes: ‘the derelict zones of drug use are the engines of late capitalism, not because they are abject, but because they are moments of difference where desire seeks to escape bodily limitation’ (2004: 416).

It is also this capacity for becomings which makes heroin chic seem so dangerous. Its ability to unravel not only the fashion industry but also all the forms of coding being deployed to prevent and ‘control’ drug use (such as drug education, media propaganda, criminal sanctions, stereotyping and labeling, and conservative ‘say no to drugs’ campaigns), understandably generated a great deal of fear and hostility. As forms of bodily becoming, both drug use and fashion constitute fields of immense desiring potential. By aesthetically pairing drug use with designer clothes and accessories, fashion photographers were able to strengthen the desiring potential, and cultural capital, of various fashion labels and fashion magazines, as well as their own fashion photography. Yet, in doing so, they were also connecting the desiring potential of fashion to drug use, setting in motion the apparent becomings-‘glamorous’ of drug use which have generated so much public fear and condemnation. These dual becomings, of drug use and fashion, have made ‘heroin chic’ seem doubly problematic: tending, as it does, toward the dangerous and potentially ‘addictive’ consumptions of both drugs and fashion. Such becomings may indeed be overcoded
by movements of imitation, or stratified as actual drug use, but they may also lead elsewhere: to new and perhaps more ethically positive bodily relations.

In this chapter I explore the ethico-aesthetics of drug-referenced advertising, with particular reference to contemporary perfume advertisements and the ‘heroin chic’ fashion photography of the 1990s. I begin by drawing on Deleuze’s (2003) and Deleuze and Guattari’s (1994) writings on art and aesthetics to explore the artistic capacities of drug-referenced advertisements. In particular, I take a detour through Deleuze’s writings on the Francis Bacon to examine the ways in which art is able to disrupt stratified understandings of the body, by rendering-perceptible otherwise imperceptible forces. I then turn to Deleuze’s concept of the cliché, as something which all art must directly and actively disrupt if it is to call forth new modes of perception. Drawing on four of the clichés detailed by Deleuze – namely: illustration, narration, figuration and faciality – I look at the ways in which they come to shape and limit the artistic capacities of drug-referenced advertisements. Finally, I draw on Deleuze (1995), and Deleuze and Guattari’s (2001, 1987, 1983) writings on capitalism to explore what happens to the artistic capacities of drug-referenced images when they are connected to assemblages of capitalism and consumption. I explore, for example, the ways in which capitalism operates (like art) via a deterritorialisation of desire, and the ways in which it simultaneously (in contrast to art) works to re-stratify these flows by limiting the kinds of forces which can be made perceptible. In doing so I draw together the domains of art and capitalism to rethink the nature of their relationship and the implications this has for an ethico-aesthetics.

The Powers of Art

Art, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, is less about creating forms than about creating sensations. Its power or strength, as we saw in the previous chapter, lies in its capacity to render-perceptible forces which would not otherwise be sense-able or knowable. Deleuze and Guattari write:

The essential relation is no longer matters-forms… It is now a direct relation material-forces… the visual material must capture nonvisible forces. Render visible, Klee said; not render or reproduce the visible (1987: 342).
All art is composed, first and foremost, of what Deleuze and Guattari (1994) term ‘percepts’ and ‘affects’. Percepts are found in the artwork itself. They can be understood as non-signifying nodes of sensation: an intensity of colour, a texture or contrast. Affects, by contrast, emerge in the connection between the artwork the body. They can be understood as non-signifying movements of sensation, felt by a body as it encounters the world: a shiver, a sudden heat, a thumping of the heart. Percepts do not in themselves narrate a story or represent something else; they create sensation, pure and simple. Likewise, affects are not emotions; they are not in the first instance processed cognitively, nor are they given a category or name such as ‘fear’ or ‘sadness’. Instead they are felt directly by the body: across the skin, along the nervous system, creating often imperceptible shifts in register, temperature or bodily posture. They are, as O’Sullivan notes, ‘passages of intensity, a reaction in or on the body at the level of matter’ (2006: 41).

Art brings percepts and affects together to produce specific assemblages, or ‘blocs’, of sensation (Deleuze and Guattari 1994). The strength of art, for Deleuze and Guattari, lies in its ability to compose percepts and affects in such a way that new modes of perception are made possible. Everyday perception, however, is always already locked into relations of signification, representation, subjectivity and emotion. The goal of art, therefore, is to shift the frame of reference such that percepts and affects – as non-signifying sensations – come to the fore. And one of the primary ways in which art achieves this goal is by rendering perceptible forces and vectors which are otherwise imperceptible.

Painting can therefore be understood in terms of its capacity to render-visible invisible forces, such as those of gravity, heaviness or heat. In the work of Cézanne, for example, Deleuze finds a skill for ‘rendering visible the folding force of mountains, the germinative force of a seed, the thermic force of a landscape’ (2003: 57), while in Van Gogh he discovers ‘the unheard-of force of a sunflower seed’ (57). Likewise, in cinema, Deleuze does not look for layers of meaning and signification but instead examines its capacity to render visible and audible forces such as movement (1986) and time (1989b). And in literature Deleuze pays attention not to the emotions and forces it narrates, but to the emotions and forces it makes palpable through the very language or style it deploys. The dreary duration of Joyce’s Dubliners; the
bureaucratic claustrophobia and frustration of Kafka’s *The Trial*; the invisible force of red flowers, which glare upon the bed-ridden patient in Sylvia Plath’s *Tulips*:

...The Tulips are too red in the first place, they hurt me/ Even through the gift paper I could hear them breathe/ Lightly, through their white swaddlings, like an awful baby/ Their redness talks to my wound, it corresponds... (Plath 2004: 19).

The strength of all art, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, is its capacity ‘to make perceptible the imperceptible forces that populate the world, affect us, and make us become’ (1994: 182).

Examining the work of Francis Bacon, Deleuze finds in it an exceptional capacity for rendering-visible otherwise imperceptible forces which act upon the body. Bacon’s paintings often depict a human or animal figure which has been distorted: its contours blurred or smudged or extended unnaturally. His figures are never deformed beyond recognition, but only to the extent that full and comfortable ‘recognition’ is precluded. In his *Three Portraits Triptych* (see Figure 18, which shows the second and third panels), Bacon presents each figure sitting awkwardly on a chair. Their faces are smudged and misshapen and their bodies contorted. Their twisted legs appear to merge with their shadows, as though leaking out from their bodies and running into a puddle on the floor. In another of Bacon’s portraits (Figure 19), entitled *Portrait of George Dyer Talking*, the figure sitting on a chair is even more contorted: its body a lumpy bundle of flesh and muscle, with one leg tucked up uncomfortably. Its head seems to be undergoing a kind of becoming-animal: a merging between human and chicken (beak, comb). For Deleuze, these paintings can be understood to be rendering visible the very real forces of discomfort felt by a body forced to sit on a chair – or talk – for hours on end. He writes:

Bacon’s Figures are not racked bodies at all, but ordinary bodies in ordinary situations of constraint and discomfort... what fascinates him are the invisible forces that model flesh or shake it... the relationship not of form and matter, but of materials and forces – making these forces visible through their effects on the flesh (2003: x).

Deleuze sees in Bacon’s works a powerful rendering visible of the body itself – freed from the stratifications, significations and subjectifications of everyday life. He sees,
in other words, a rendering-perceptible of the invisible forces that surge through the stratified and organised body: the forces proper to the body without organs. Bacon’s *Study After Velázquez’s Portraits of Pope Innocent X* (see Figure 20), for example, can be understood as a study of these inner forces: forces which swarm beneath a figure and which most portraits (including Velázquez’s original) tend to hide. In this case, we witness the forces of violence and terror of which reside beneath the robes and formality of the Catholic church. And in Bacon’s *Triptych May-June 1973* (Figure 21, which shows the first and third panels), we see the forces at work upon a body sitting on a toilet for a long time, or vomiting into a basin. Forces which contort the body: deforming it, forcing its eyes closed, its mouth open, its back hunched. As Deleuze notes:

we witness the revelation of the body beneath the organism, which makes organisms and their elements crack or swell, imposes a spasm on them, and puts them into relation with forces – sometimes with an inner force that arouses them, sometimes with external forces that traverse them (2003: 160-1).

Bacon later brings together an eruption of internal and external forces in his two drug-referenced paintings: *Henrietta Moraes (Lying Figure with Hypodermic Syringe)* (see Figure 22) and *Version No.2 of Lying figure with Hypodermic Syringe* (Figure 23). Both versions present a female figure lying on a bed with a syringe needle sticking into an outstretched arm. Yet the forces traversing each figure differ remarkably. Where the figure in the first image appears to be relaxed – body outstretched, head resting against an arm: as though basking in the sun – the figure in the second image appears contorted and deformed. Except for the outstretched arm from which the syringe protrudes, its body parts are no longer discernable. Where the first is surrounded by smooth, a-signifying spaces of uniform colour, the second is encased by a kind of partition. The front of the partition appears transparent – perhaps made of glass or perspex – while the back component, behind the figure, is striated by vertical panels, which impose a force of stratification and codification upon the figure. Where the force of the drug in the first image is one which relaxes a body, freeing it of stratification, in the second image the force of the drug is one which simultaneously deforms and rigidifies: bringing forth the body without organs at the same time as it draws forth all the stratifications of habit and social sanctioning. Referring to this second version, Deleuze writes that it ‘is less a nailed-down body… than a body
attempting to pass through the syringe and to escape through this hole or vanishing point’ (2003: 17-18). To escape its striations, its identity and representational consistency. To connect to an outside.

Through his paintings, Bacon makes this virtual ‘outside’ perceptible:

he establishes a relationship between the visibility of the scream… and invisible forces, which are nothing other than the forces of the future… the diabolical powers of the future knocking at the door (Deleuze 2003: 60-1).

The power of art is its ability to offer up these forces of the future: forces outside of current modes of perception and corporeality; ‘an excess not somehow beyond the world but an excess of the world’ (O’Sullivan 2006: 40). In doing so, art has the capacity to make possible new ways of being and relating: new ways of folding the self (2006).

By rendering perceptible these otherwise invisible forces upon the body, Bacon not only produces new ways of perceiving but also engenders new becomings. As Deleuze and Guattari suggest:

[artists] are presenters of affects, the inventors and creators of affects. They not only create them in their work, they give them to us and make us become with them (1994: 175).

This is the power of art and also its ethics. Art enables the formation of new bodies; bodies which perceive in new ways, which are composed in new ways, and which have the potential to connect to others in new ways. Art does not address a pre-existent audience, but instead creates its own audience: an audience with new perceptual capacititates; new potentialities for living (Zepke 2005: 4). This is the ethico-aesthetic potential of art, and it is what Deleuze and Guattari are referring to when they say that art has the power to bring forth a ‘people to come’ (1994: 218).

But what sorts of future people do heroin chic and other drug-referenced advertisements bring forth? Can they be thought of as an art, and if so, what forms of perception do they make possible?
One of the earliest fashion photographers to have her work tagged with the ‘heroin-chic’ label was UK photographer Corrine Day, whose ‘documentary’ style images of models looking thin, anxious, bruised, doped-out and unwell quickly gained international notoriety (see Figures 14 and 15). Produced at a time when glossy, well-lit images of healthy, smiling, curvaceous women had dominated mainstream fashion photography (Harold 1999), Day’s photographs are conspicuously bleak. Her models are photographed in seemingly ‘everyday’ postures and locations: rarely are they in the centre of the image and seldom do they look at the camera. Her unusual framing creates the sense that the photos have been taken by an amateur – a friend of the subject perhaps – rather than by a fashion photographer. The images are overexposed, emphasising the starkness of the location, and do not appear to be touched-up in any way. The settings – usually shabby rooms in cheap rental apartments – seem to be as much the subject of the photograph as the models themselves, and the designer clothes and accessories being worn seem to recede into the background. So much so that, except for the context of their publication in fashion magazines, the images have little to suggest that they are advertisements at all.

The first image (Figure 14), for example, presents a thin young, semi-dressed woman in what appears to be a pretty dingy lounge-room. The woman kneels awkwardly, her body twisted and bent forward over the side of an armchair. She appears without obvious make-up, and is naked, save for her dark nail polish and the designer underwear she models. Surrounding her, and taking up most of the image, is a dingy red carpet with what seem to be cigarette burns. Also in frame is the cold, white-tiled edge of a fireplace, an exposed electrical cord, and the low-slung armchair which seems to be barely holding her up. The woman’s exposed feet are covered in dirt and her face is shiny, as though coated in a fine layer of sweat. The photo’s strange angle creates a sense that the room is spinning, and accentuates the gravitational weight of her thin, unsteady body as she tries un成功fully to push herself up.

In the second image (Figure 15) the same woman now lies on her side on the floor of the same bare room, her head resting on one of the cushions from the couch. The cooler exposure of the photograph changes the tone of the dingy carpet beneath her, and emphasises the cold white edge of the fireplace behind her. Although lying down, she does not look comfortable; her legs are crossed and twisted awkwardly: seemingly
cramped for space near the wall. Her bare left arm stretches out along the carpet, her mouth is slightly open and her gaze toward the viewer is unfocussed and vacant. Again, the photo’s strange angle creates a sense that the room is spinning, and that she has given in to the distorted pull of gravity.

These images do, in many ways, render-perceptible invisible forces which can act upon a body. They draw attention to the force: of a body’s weight pressing down upon the heels of the feet; of shoulder-blades pulling tense against skin; of rough carpet rubbing up against toes, ankles, knees. Perhaps they also draw attention to the forces of heroin: its capacity to soften and weaken the muscles; distort proprioception and time; bring on a sleepiness; or induce a cold sweat during withdrawal. In encountering these images, one can become aware of one’s own weight, one’s own eyes and skin, one’s own posture, one’s own perception of time and space. One can perceive the relation between the body and its surroundings, and between the body and its potentiality, in new light. These deterritorialisations of perception carry with them an ethico-aesthetic capacity. As Harold has argued, it is the very ‘unruly’ corporeality of the heroin chic body which ‘perform[s] an ethical function… [for such] bodies do not adhere to reason, [and as such] require one to make ethical responses without the safety-net of a moral map for guidance’ (1999: 74).

There are, however, a range of forces which can limit the ethico-aesthetic potentials of art. Art, as Deleuze suggests, does not begin on an empty canvas or page, but on one which is always already crowded with representational forces and tendencies which he terms ‘clichés’. These clichés are forms of representation which stratify and limit aesthetic possibilities:

modern painting is invaded and besieged by photographs and clichés that are already lodged on the canvas before the painter even begins to work… it would be a mistake to think that the painter works on a white and virgin surface. The entire surface is already invested virtually with all kinds of clichés, which the painter will have to break with (Deleuze 2003: 10-1).

As with any art, heroin chic images and other drug-referenced advertisements need to actively break with such clichés if their artistic, ethico-aesthetic potentials are to be realised. I will now examine the different sorts of cliché which Deleuze identifies,
and the strategies he proposes for breaking with them, in order that we might evaluate the extent to which the artistic capacities of drug-referenced advertisements are realised.

**The Dangers of the Cliché**

We are besieged by photographs that are illustrations, by newspapers that are narrations, by cinema-images, by television images… ready-made perceptions, memories, phantasms… a whole category of things that could be termed “clichés” already fills the canvas, before the beginning (Deleuze 2003: 87).

In Deleuze’s book on Francis Bacon (2003), he focuses on four representational clichés: those of illustration (reproducing that which is already visible); narration (trying to communicate a set story or meaning); figuration (using symbolism to convey meaning and significance); and faciality (the production of a stratified identity through representation of a particular, recognisable ‘face’). These four clichés – illustration, figuration, narration, and faciality – shape what it is possible to artistically see, think and do. They limit the ways in which an artist can imagine the world, and as such, the forms of art they can produce (O’Sullivan 2006).

Despite its smooth appearance, therefore, the artist’s ‘empty’ workspace is always already ‘full’: heavily striated by a range of historically embedded clichés. Certain forms are always already more likely than others to appear, and, as such, the canvas is delineated according to a prior set of probabilities (Deleuze 2003). The first thing an artist must do, therefore, is to smooth out, or deterritorialise, their workspace in order to enable new modes of perception to emerge. Deleuze and Guattari write:

> the page or canvas is already so covered with preexisting, preestablished clichés that it is first necessary to erase, to clean, to flatten, even to shred, so as to let in a breath of air from the chaos that brings us the vision (1994: 204).

Yet this process of erasing, cleaning, flattening and shredding is an extremely difficult one, requiring active, purposeful effort. It is not sufficient to simply cover over or work around the clichés. Nor do transformation or parody suffice, for such methods fail to destroy clichés: remaining caught in their frames of reference:
Clichés are always already on the canvas, and if the painter is content to transform the cliché, to deform or mutilate it... this reaction is still too intellectual, to abstract: it allows the cliché to rise again from its ashes, it leaves the painter within the milieu of cliché, or else gives him or her no other consolation than parody (Deleuze 2003: 87).

Examining the work of Bacon, Deleuze identifies at least five successful strategies which can be employed in painting to dismantle the cliché. The first of these he calls the use of ‘free marks’ (2003: 94): random or chance inscriptions which are made on the artist’s canvas at the very beginning. These are, literally, markings made by the artist without a sense of purpose or deliberation. Rather than being directed toward the representation or communication of particular stories or figures or ideas, these marks work to deterritorialise the canvas, breaking with its figurative tendencies and introducing a bit of chaos into the mix. Deleuze writes:

> how do I proceed so that what I paint does not become a cliché? “Free marks” will have to be made rather quickly on the image being painted so as to destroy the nascent figuration in it... These marks can be called “non-representative” precisely because they depend on the act of chance and express nothing regarding the visual image; they only concern the hand of the painter... who will use them to wrench the visual image away from the nascent cliché... away from the nascent illustration and narration (93-4).

A second strategy Deleuze identifies is ‘isolation’: the rendering of a figure or body alone, without others. This isolation of a figure is an important means of dispensing with illustration and narrative:

> A story always slips into, or tends to slip into, the space between two figures in order to animate the illustrated whole. Isolation is thus the simplest means, necessary though not sufficient, to break with representation, to disrupt narration, to escape illustration (Deleuze 2003: 3).

The use of what Deleuze terms ‘asignifying traits’ (2003: 5) is another strategy used by Bacon to disrupt clichés of representation. Asignifying traits are any forms on a painting or figure that have no representational or meaningful function. Fields of colour or texture are generally asignifying, except where they represent certain things, such as the sky or the earth. Asignifying traits work to produce a smoothing of space: a kind of close-range or haptic vision, with no relation of depth or distance.
A fourth technique is that which Deleuze refers to as ‘scrubbing’. The creation of ‘scrubbed out’ or blurred zones along the edges of a figure, for example, works to disrupt figuration, illustration and faciality by dismantling the clichéd, stratified unity or recognisability of the figure itself. In Bacon’s *Three Portraits Triptych* (see Figure 18) for example, parts of the subjects’ faces have been scrubbed out, forcing them to merge with their surrounds. This strategy renders visible the fluidity of the figure or body, and its often imperceptible connection to the world around it.

Faciality can also be disrupted by ensuring that it is the body, not the face, which comes to the fore. Faces, as Deleuze and Guattari (1978) explain, are so often the primary point of reference and recognition (not just in art, but in all social interactions) that the body and its many affects tend to be rendered imperceptible. Faces operate as a means of stratifying the body: giving it a known and recognisable identity. The prominence and significance of the face needs, therefore, to be dismantled in order that the body’s capacities for affecting and being affected are able to be perceived.

The faces in Bacon’s paintings are made to disappear in various ways: hidden behind the body; transformed into animal forms; or blurred beyond recognition. Deleuze writes:

Bacon is a painter of heads, not faces, and there is a great difference between the two. For the face is a structured, spatial organisation that conceals the head… Bacon thus pursues a very peculiar project as a portrait painter: to dismantle the face, to rediscover the head or make it emerge from beneath the face (2003: 20-1).

In the first panel of Bacon’s *Triptych May-June, 1973* (Figure 21), for example, the figure’s face is made to disappear, and the body – its musculature, its postures – is brought to the fore. And in *Portrait of George Dyer Talking* (Figure 19), as we have seen, the face becomes part-bird; a great avian-becoming. In these latter paintings, in which the face is either blurred, obscured or allowed to become-animal, invisible forces which act upon the face – normally hidden by social forces of stratification and identification – are rendered perceptible.
Together, these five strategies – of free marks, isolation, asignifying traits, scrubbing and de-facialisation – are employed by Bacon to dismantle the representational clichés of illustration, narration, figuration and facality. Together, they allow the imperceptible forces which act upon bodies to be rendered perceptible. I will now examine the ways in which drug-referenced advertising negotiates its own aesthetic clichés and the extent to which it might still be capable of artistic becomings.

**Drug-Referenced Advertisements: Art or Cliché?**

Looking back at the heroin-chic images detailed above, one can discern several ways in which they have failed to break with representational clichés. First, to the extent that they appear as a kind of ‘documentary’ realism, they remain haunted by the cliché of illustration. As Deleuze notes, illustration is a cliché to which all photography is prone (2003: 91). The apparent simplicity of the photographic method – in which a camera exposes a film to light from the world outside it – tends to obscure the many ways in which photographers are involved in the construction of images: choosing not only the location and subject of their photo but also, amongst other things, the framing, angle, posture, lighting and mood. It also tends to obscure processes of photo manipulation and selection, in which certain forms and representations of ‘reality’ are made visible and knowable, while others are discarded.

Documentary-style photography is particularly problematic in its failure to break with illustration and narration. Through its allusions to realism it tends, more than any other form of photography, to obscure its own processes of construction and cultural production (Fitzgerald 2002a). In contrast to the fashion photography of the time – a field of reference dominated by glossy, stylised images of meticulously made-up models, where fantasy and artifice are de rigueur – images such as Day’s are disruptive precisely because they seem to act as illustrations: as representations of a ‘real’ world beneath and beyond fashion. By diagramming some of the forces which can impact upon any body, including those of fashion models, these images begin to dismantle the clichés of beauty and perfection which are embedded in the fashion industry. However, to the extent that they fail to disrupt the cliché of illustration itself – a representational form which reaffirms the world as it supposedly ‘is’: a world
which is recognisable, familiar and knowable\textsuperscript{51} – such images fail to render visible the forces of construction which shape all photographs and, more importantly, fail to disrupt the assumption that there is a truth or reality which can be represented in the first place.

Second, these images also fail to break with the cliché of narration. Images have the capacity to generate a story or narrative sequence not only through their connection to other images in a series, but also – more importantly – through the way in which they are internally constructed. One of the most common methods is the use of a ‘recognisable’ setting or a collection of ‘recognisable’ objects to signify or suggest a storyline. In one of Juergen Teller’s drug-referenced fashion photographs (Figure 24), for example, the woman’s cocktail dress and high-heel shoes, the dim lighting, and the presence of a lampshade and sagging couch, suggest she has arrived home – or possibly to a cheap hotel – after an evening of partying. The woman’s posture and disarray – slumped forward on the couch, dress partly unzipped, one shoe on the floor – suggest that her extreme tiredness and/or intoxication (perhaps alcohol, perhaps another drug) has prevented her from changing out of her clothes and making it to bed. Although such narratives may be highly ambiguous, and will certainly differ between (and within) each viewer, they tend to reduce an image to a limited ‘range’ of interpretive possibilities. They also shift the force of the image away from the production of non-conscious sensory hæcceities and affects, to the production of conscious, linear narratives, meanings and truths.

Another, more explicit style of narrative overcoding used in drug-referenced advertising involves the use of an accompanying text or dialogue. In the Dior \textit{Addict} perfume advertisement with which I began this Chapter, for example, the use of the words ‘Addict’ and ‘Admit it’ play a narrative function: directing the viewer to a particular type of storyline, and narrowing the range of interpretive possibilities. Similarly, in one of Calvin Klein’s \textit{CK Be} perfume advertisements, the models – presented in triptych-style – are accompanied by the text: ‘be hot. be cool. just be’.

\textsuperscript{51} Referring specifically to Teller’s work, Lai (2006) notes that realist images such as these fail to destabilise the fashion industry because they instead work to recoup consumers who are otherwise jaded by the artifice of fashion advertisements. Through Teller’s realist images, such consumers are re-connected to the fashion industry – made to feel as though the world of glamour and high fashion is not so removed from their world after all (2006).
This narrative works to overcode the image, focusing perception upon the ways in which the models appear to be, variously: ‘hot’, ‘cool’ and ‘confidently indifferent’. In an advertisement for ICB clothing, a similar narrative trope is used. The image presents an androgynous figure lying along a couch, right arm outstretched as though perhaps awaiting an injection of heroin or speed. Although the arm is to the left of the image, attention is drawn toward it by the small text – ‘i can be myself’ – which appears above it. The text not only makes reference to the letters of the brand, I.C(an).B(e), but also overcodes the image, reducing its potentiality. Whether it is the clothing, drugs, or something else which enables the figure to ‘be themselves’ remains ambiguous, yet the trajectory – to be one’s-self – is not.

*Figuration* is another form of cliché which haunts many drug-referenced advertisements. Such advertisements tend to rely on certain visual codes and symbols which are easily recognisable as signs of drug use. These symbols are figurations: representational clichés which stand in for, and signify, particular forces. Such coded references work to the extent that they reproduce – or cite – an established history of coded drug representations in documentary photography, media and film (Fitzgerald 2002a). The documentary photography of artists such as Larry Clark, Nan Goldin, Eugene Richards, Susan Watts and John Raynard, has been particularly influential in this regard (2002a), as have popular films such as *Trainspotting*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Drugstore Cowboy*, and *Christiane F*. A particular range of recognisable signs of drug use are produced and continually reproduced in photography, film and news-media, as well as in advertising. The use of an outstretched arm – with the crook of the elbow facing upwards or toward the camera – has, for example, become a common technique through which to suggest injecting drug use. Another common way in which drug use is suggestively made ‘visible’ in advertising imagery is through the application of codes of ‘disease’ or ‘illness’ to the body (Hickman 2002: 122). These include: the darkening of the subjects’ eyes; the addition of bruises, scabs or abscesses; the drooping of the eyelids; and the sagging of the head, hunching of the body or holding of the stomach. Although such figurations do not necessarily signify drug use, they cannot be separated from a general tendency to link drug use to a kind of primitive desire (Fitzgerald 2002a) and to a desire lacking in reason, rationality and will-power (Keane 2002).
The use of such figurations is also tied to the production of particular clichéd forms of *faciality*. As Fitzgerald (2002a) argues, such faciality has important ethical implications for the ways in which drug-using bodies can be ‘recognised’, perceived and connected to. He writes:

> There is a tendency in drug photography to attempt to make images of dark, seedy, secret worlds. This can have the effect of Othering the subject, or making them different through exoticising them… thus a certain safety or distanciation can occur between the reader/watcher and the subject (374).

The diseasing of the body in drug-referenced advertising thus has important implications for an ethics of bodily relations. The concern here is not that certain photographs or representations might offend drug users, or might present them incorrectly, but rather that certain representations might limit the potential for drug-using bodies to connect with other bodies. The concern is not a moral one, but an ethico-aesthetics: an ethics of aesthetic production which avoids representation and remains careful as to the kinds of bodies and relations which it makes possible. Rather than calling for a (moral) censoring of drug imagery, Fitzgerald (2002a) calls on photographers and artists to be aware of the power of their images and of the kinds of ‘realities’ they are helping to produce. Such an approach, as Colebrook suggests, aims ‘not to get away from images so much as to reveal and intensify their production’ (2002: 94).

To the extent that drug-referenced advertising images rely on clichéd representations of drug use, they operate not to enhance connections between bodies (through a becoming-other) but rather to further stratify and segregate them. This in turn reduces the potential for other connections, such as those of empathy and compassion. As Giroux writes:

> Bodies presented within stylised images that are anorexic, physically abused, and paralysed from substance abuse do not evoke sympathy or compassion but work largely to reinforce our image of youth as symbols of violence, crime, and social disorder and women as simply sexualised commodities (2000: 69).

Drug-referenced photographers need to work actively to dismantle or disrupt these clichés in order to allow something new – a new mode of perception – to emerge. As
Deleuze notes, it is not enough to parody the cliché. Self-consciously exaggerated or dramatised heroin chic photographs, for example, do not escape the cliché, nor do images which use parody to try to attack the fashion industry’s impact on women (see Figure 25). Such images, as Deleuze suggests, still remain in the realm of the cliché. Photographers must instead find strategies – some drawn from painting, others unique to photography – which dismantle the various clichés filling their workspace in order to call forth new modes of perception and becoming.

Amongst the drug-referenced fashion images of the 1990s, very few attempts at actively breaking with representational clichés can be discerned. Mario Sorrenti’s work stands out in this regard. In many of his photographs, as in Bacon’s paintings, a figure is generally presented alone, centred in the image and surrounded by a field of uniform, saturated colour. Instead of trying to represent a known and knowable word, such images work to separate perception from the actual in order to open it out onto the field of the virtual. By isolating the figure, such images circumvent the tendency to convey force through a story or sequence of events. Instead of telling a story, they focus on conveying a mood or a force; and on draw attention to the capacities of the body for affecting and being affected.

In Mario Sorrenti’s Keren (Figure 16), for example, a young woman wearing a black t-shirt and pale blue singlet and underpants, is framed by a soft greenish-grey backdrop. Her slender figure is slumped forward on a stool, her upper body propped up by her elbows pressing into her thighs. Her head hangs down, as though the effort to raise it for the photograph might have been too great. She looks more unwell than exhausted, her uncomfortable position on the tiny stool suggesting a need, rather than desire, to sit down. The stillness of the image, with its uniform colour, does not seem at all tranquil. It is as though the room is in danger of spinning, its potentiality pressing like a weight against her head, her stomach, her body.

By isolating the figure, the forces upon the body are able to come to the fore: the numbing of muscles, the soft heaviness of the arms and eyelids, and the strange contortioning of the body as it tries to reposition itself or hold itself together. Perhaps these are the forces of a drug, or an anorexia. Ultimately they are forces which would act upon any body which was forced – as in Bacon’s paintings – to ‘sit for hours on a
The marks or traits of animality are not animal forms, but rather the spirits that haunt the wiped of parts... what Bacon’s painting constitutes is a *zone of indiscernibility or undecidability* between man and animal (2003: 21).

During the 1990s and early 2000s, a range of other bodies-in-becoming appeared in fashion magazines alongside those of heroin chic. Advertisements tapped into themes of: gender; sexuality; masochism; bodily prosthetics (becomings-horse, becoming-dangerous); anorexia; bulimia; self harm; suicide; accidents; disasters; crime; death and murder. Like heroic chic’s figures, these bodies work to render-perceptible extreme forces upon the body: forces of gravity; of potentia; the force of flesh falling on hard concrete. The force of a hand pushed against the back of the mouth; the force of the stomach flexing; the force of a body trying to escape from itself, to leak out from its confines: ‘Why not walk on your head, sing with your sinuses, see through your skin, breathe with your belly’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 151). The force of ropes pulling along skin; metal spikes pressing against flesh. The force of a drug upon the body. As Deleuze notes:

> The entire series of spasms in Bacon is of this type: scenes of love, of vomiting and excreting, in which the body attempts to escape from itself *through* one of its organs in order to rejoin the field or material structure... the scream, Bacon’s scream, is the operation through which the entire body escapes through the mouth (2003: 16).
Like the figure in Bacon’s *Version No.2 of Lying Figure with Hypodermic Syringe* (1968) (Figure 23) the extreme figures presented to us in mid-1990s fashion photography can be understood as bodies attempting to escape the confines of their corporeal existence. They are bodies which are leaking out in all directions: moving fast toward their limit-points: toward schizophrenia, overdose, unconsciousness, death. Through them, the BwO – with all its potentiality and danger – is made sensible, palpable. Deleuze writes:

Beyond the organism, but also at the limit of the lived body, there lies what Artaud discovered and named: the body without organs… It is an intense and intensive body… traversed by a wave that traces levels or thresholds in the body according to the variations of its amplitude (2003: 44-5).

This BwO is the invisible, desiring force of all bodies. It is the force of the virtual: the force of an outside of perception and sensation and which opens onto the future. It is the body un-actualised, or pre-actualised: the body in its virtual form.

Understood within the context of these advertising images – as a succession of becomings, flows, chaotic forces and lines of flight – drug-referenced and heroin chic advertising can be thought of as generating substantial artistic and affective force. To the extent that its images render-perceptible invisible forces upon the body – such as those of drug use, desire, exhaustion, dizziness and nausea – they have the potential to disrupt our perception of the body and its relationship with the world. More specifically, notes Harold (1999: 72), they have the capacity to challenge a range of modern assumptions about the self and the body. They do so, first, by demonstrating the body’s fluid, porous nature. The body here can no longer be understood as unified and autonomous, but must be understood as intimately related to, and affected by, the world around it. ‘Heroin chic’ images also have the potential to dismantle modernist ideals of reason and rationality; a body affected by invisible forces, desires and passions, is not one which can be governed by a rational free will. ‘Heroin chic’ images thus work to deterritorialise the very idea of an enduring self or identity, illustrating instead ‘the self’s position within a fluctuating nexus between always-changing, always-becoming identities’ (72).
Combined, these movements of deterritorialisation also have the potential to shift the ways in which social ethics can be understood and enacted (Harold 1999). To the extent that they demonstrate the power of bodies to differ from themselves, heroin chic’s images might be capable of promoting a kind of ethics based on our mutual capacity to differ, to become-other, rather than an ethics or morality based on our essential sameness or human-ness. As Harold argues:

> An ethical framework that accounts for corporeality… might encourage an engagement with others based not on the other’s degree of similarity to ourselves and our ideals… [but rather] this irreducible otherness that simultaneously connects us (75).

Such an ethics connects bodies through their difference – through their power of differing – rather than through their sameness to one another. As such, it enhances the potential for new inter-personal relations to form.

Yet most drug-referenced and ‘heroin chic’ advertisements do not succeed in these artistic, ethico-aesthetic functions. Many, as we have seen, fail to disrupt the clichéd forms of representation which limit the ways in which the body – and the drug-using body – can be made perceptible, and as such, have difficulty launching new becomings and lines of flight. And even where drug-referenced advertising succeeds in breaking with cliché, there is yet another force which must be taken into account – that of consumer capitalism. As Roffe notes:

> Even once an artwork breaks free of the gravity of the territorial cliché, there remains the other subversive movement: that of capitalism… which threatens to strip the artwork of its distinctiveness in order to submit it to the commodity form (2005: unpaginated).

**Art and Capitalism(s)**

There is no universal capitalism, there is no capitalism in itself; capitalism is at the crossroads of all kinds of formations (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 20).

As Deleuze and Guattari suggest, capitalism should not be thought of as a single, unified, all-encompassing entity. Capitalism does not, as many seem to imagine, subsume all spheres of life, nor does it define all relations between bodies. Capitalism can instead be thought of as a collection of interconnected, diverse and ever-changing
socio-economic formations and practices (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 20). Or perhaps it is better, as Gibson-Graham (1996) suggests, to simply replace the term ‘capitalism’ with ‘capitalisms’. She writes: there is ‘no capitalism but only capitalisms’ (247), which together constitute ‘a set of practices scattered over a landscape’ (254). These capitalisms coexist with a variety of other, non-capitalist social and economic relations (18). The general misconception that ‘capitalism’ constitutes an all-encompassing unity, has operated to reduce our capacities for challenging it, and for finding and fostering sites of alternative exchange (256). The idea of ‘capitalist hegemony’, she writes, ‘operates not only as a constituent of, but also as a brake upon, the anticapitalist imagination’ (3). Although Deleuze and Guattari tend to retain the term ‘capitalism’, I believe, following Gibson-Graham, that the terms ‘capitalisms’ and ‘sites of capital’ are more effective at drawing attention to their multiple interspersed nature.

One of the most interesting things about capitalisms is that they tend to operate through, and thrive upon, the production of deterritorialised flows (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 453). Flows of money, of goods, of labour and trade; flows of information, language and art; flows of desire and identity: all are produced and supported within sites of capital. Unlike the State, capitalisms thrive upon the capacity, and desire, of bodies to become-other. Through sites of capitalist consumption, for example, bodies are increasingly able to mutate: to transform their identities, their behaviours, their organisation and their potentials. As Massumi notes, ‘subjectivity is being disengaged from the plane of transcendence of “human” being, becoming an immanent abstract machine of mutation’ (1992: 135). Capitalisms care very little for the categories of identity, morality, reason and rationality that otherwise pervade the social strata. You can see and say and be and do almost anything in relation to sites of capital, so long as you don’t interrupt the flows. Even better if you help to channel them. As Colebrook suggests:

in capitalism[s] it no longer matters what circulates – whether it is money, goods, information, or even… messages of feminism, multiculturalism and community – as long as there is constant exchange (2002: 65).

In relation to sites of capital then, remarkable possibilities seem to open up for becomings-other: for deterritorialising the body and its relations with the world. The
becoming body, write Fitzgerald and Threadgold (2004), ‘is both beautiful, fear instilling and a source for productive capital in modern capitalist societies’ (415); it is ‘a most valuable site as it is at once both marginal and central to the production of capital’ (415). These becomings and deterritorialisation which are so valuable to capitalism, however, cannot be separated from the movements of reterritorialisation, which are also an essential part of the operation of capital. As Patton suggests, ‘capitalist societies simultaneously reterritorialise what they deterritorialise, producing all manner of “neoterritorialities”’ (2000: 97).

For while capitalisms are busy destratifying bodies and codes: they are also simultaneously engendering extreme forms of stratification: producing, for example, rigid striations of wealth and poverty, and first and third worlds. As Deleuze suggests:

the market’s not universalising, homogenising, it’s an extraordinary generator of both wealth and misery. A concern for human rights shouldn’t lead us to extol the “joys” of the liberal capitalism of which they’re an integral part. There’s no democratic state that’s not compromised to the very core by its part in generating human misery (1995: 172-3).

These seemingly opposing forces of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation are not at all incompatible. As Deleuze and Guattari make clear, capitalisms’ becomings – like all becomings – are always double: involving not only a line of deterritorialisation, but also an equal and opposite movement of reterritorialisation. They write:

How could movements of deterritorialisation and processes of reterritorialisation not be relative, always connected, caught up in one another? The orchid deterritorialises by forming an image, a tracing of a wasp; but the wasp reterritorialises on that image. The wasp is nevertheless deterritorialised, becoming a piece in the orchid’s reproductive apparatus. But it reterritorialises the orchid by transporting its pollen… Each of these becomings brings about the deterritorialisation of one term and the reterritorialisation of the other; the two becomings interlink and form relays in a circulation of intensities pushing the deterritorialisation ever further (1987: 10)

As I have noted previously – pure lines of deterritorialisation or territorialisation both tend towards self-destruction; the former leading toward an empty BwO, and the latter leading to rigid catatonia. One always needs, for example, a little bit of organisation
and striation, if only to be able to launch forth on a new line of flight. One reason – perhaps even the primary reason – capitalisms are so successful is because they have mastered the coordination and modulation of the two forces deterriorialisation-reterritorialisation. Deleuze and Guattari write:

It is as though, at the outcome of the striation that capitalism was able to carry to an unequalled point of perfection, circulating capital necessarily recreated, reconstituted, a sort of smooth space in which the destiny of human beings is recast… the essential thing is… the distinction between *striated capital* and *smooth capital*, and the way in which the former gives rise to the latter (1987: 492).

The question of the success of capitalisms then, is not one of ‘freedom’ versus ‘constraint’, observe Deleuze and Guattari, ‘but of the manner in which one masters the flows’ (1987: 462). Contemporary globalised capitalisms are increasingly perfecting the speed of transference between deterriorialisation and reterritorialisation, such that the pulsating movement from one to the other happens at an ever-greater efficiency and speed. As Deleuze and Guattari note: ‘at the complementary and dominant level of integrated (or rather integrating) world capitalism, a new smooth space is produced in which capital reaches its “absolute” speed’ (492).

In order to coordinate and modulate these movements, sites of capital rely on the cooperation of the State. States assist capitalisms by creating the mechanisms, rules and laws (such as ‘free trade’, ‘foreign exchange’, ‘deregulation’ and ‘the World Bank’) which enable flows of capital to circulate. Deleuze and Guattari refer to these rules as axioms. They write:

In order to be effectuated, capitalism has always required there to be a new force and a new law of States, on the level of the flow of labour as on the level of the flow of independent capital… [Increasingly] States are not at all transcendent paradigms of an overcoding but immanent models of realisation for an axiomatic of decoded flows (1987: 455).

This does not mean, however, that States are no longer at all interested in the coding and regulating of bodies. However, rather than code bodies according to qualitative values (gender, sexuality, ethnicity, etc), capitalist States increasingly tend to code bodies in ways that are quantitative; their aim is to regulate and direct flows
(consumption, trade, profits etc) rather than to judge them. They focus less, in other words, on coding bodies in terms of hierarchical molar identities and categories, and more on coding them in terms of their functional capacity to effect flows of capital. That is, in terms of their exchange, rather than moral, value.

Thus we see in relation to capitalisms, the simultaneous production and suppression, release and containment, exploitation and censorship of minoritarian bodies. As we have seen, sites of capital are increasingly adept at harnessing the desiring-potentials of minoritarian, nomadic and deterritorialising bodies. The cultural and bodily becomings-other of young people, the poor, ethnic minorities, anorexics, drug users: all are increasingly harnessed to market goods. At the same time, the suppression of minoritarian groups and movements is increasingly tied to the threat they pose to capitalist axiomatics and flows. In many ‘producing’ nations, for example, workers protesting their conditions are often violently crushed by a totalitarian State acting in the direct interests of – and with the cooperation and support of – large multinational corporations. As Deleuze and Guattari note, ‘we have often seen capitalism maintain and organise inviable States, according to its needs, and for the precise purpose of crushing minorities’ (1987: 472). We also see minorities in ‘consumer’ nations – protesters, the homeless, drug users – regularly suppressed or ‘moved on’ in the interests of maximising flows of capital. As Deleuze and Guattari observe:

Capitalism has been tied from birth to a savage repressiveness; it had its organisation of power and its state apparatus from the start. Did capitalism imply dissolution of the previous social codes and powers? Certainly. But it had already established its wheels of power, including its power of class in the fissures of previous regimes (2001: 220).

The source of these violences, however, tends to be very difficult to locate, given the speed at which capitalisms are able to distribute and modulate their de- and re-territorialisations. As Deleuze and Guattari suggest, ‘from a standpoint within the capitalist mode of production, it is very difficult to say who is the thief and who the victim, or even where the violence resides… even though it is reactivated every day (1987: 447). The extent of the violence, which includes violence against all sorts of minoritarian bodies (third-world producers, ethnic minorities, Indigenous bodies, women, children, animals, trees) is also often obscured by the ‘freedoms’ offered
within spaces of ‘first world’ consumer capitalism, at least for those who have the capacity to consume.

The deterritorialising potentials opened up by capitalist advertisements, therefore, cannot be separated from the territorialisation and stratification of minoritarian bodies, nor from the obscuring of these territorialisations. Yet our ability to think beyond the logic and aesthetics of capitalisms, and to develop successful forms of resistance to the sorts of harms they entail, are themselves continually undermined by capitalisms, which are increasingly taking over responsibility for the production and circulation of philosophy, art and politics. In relation to their appropriation of philosophy, Deleuze and Guattari (1994) express particular concern. They note that advertisers and marketers are now often seen as ‘creatives’: capable of producing ever new marketing ‘concepts’ and advertising ‘ideas’. They write: ‘marketing appropriates the concept and advertising puts itself forward as the conceiver par excellence, as the poet and thinker’ (99). At the same time, corporations are increasingly using advertisements to encourage consumers to view them, and their brands or logos, as philosophers (Goldman and Papson 1998: 173). These trajectories are concerning, for as capitalism takes over the conceptual role of philosophy, the space and energy available for thinking ‘outside’ of capitalism is diminished (175).

Just as concerning, however, are the ways in which capitalisms are directly taking over politics and political resistance. They are doing so in at least three different ways. First, at the level of ideology, capitalisms promote themselves as a source of democracy, diversity and freedom (as distinct from the ‘repressions’ of socialism and communism). Terms such as “free trade” and “economic rationalism” assist in this process, helping to make globalised capitalisms seem not only free but also entirely rational. This ideological positioning works to occlude the unique organisation of power and violence within capitalism. As Deleuze notes: ‘The current political situation is very muddled. People tend to confuse the quest for freedom with the embrace of capitalism. It seems doubtful that the joys of capitalism are enough to liberate a people’ (2006: 379).

Second, capitalisms tend to recode social politics as a politics of the self, by framing individualism and self-interested consumption as a source of social (and economic)
ethics. They do so by turning potentially revolutionary flows of desire inward, tying them to individualised ‘lack’ and ‘pleasure’, and recoding them as a desire ‘for’. This takes place through schools, through the media, and advertising, and also through psychoanalysis, which has always insisted on reading desire as evidence of lack (Deleuze and Guattari 1983). Consumption thus becomes a means of social participation, social identity and ‘wholeness’. It is also being increasingly tied to national socio-economic prosperity. As Massumi notes, when capitalisms do ‘produce precepts, one is heard with overwhelming regularity: the idea that a body can serve the interests of society by serving itself (not only “can”: can only’) (1992: 139-40).

Following the September 11 terrorist attacks in the US, for example, citizens were urged by politicians to go shopping as an act of patriotic sacrifice for their country (Glickman 2005: 599). While president George W. Bush encouraged US citizens ‘to “buy, buy, buy”’, New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani ‘urged them to “spend, spend, spend”’ and Miami Mayor Alex Panelas ‘claimed “it has never been more patriotic to go shopping”’ (599).

Third, capitalism appropriates politics at the level of marketing. Benetton Clothing, for example, uses confronting, socio-realist advertisements (including the now (in)famous advertisement featuring a man who is dying of AIDS, to encourage consumers to view their company as an important source of socio-political commentary (Sturken and Cartwright 2001; see also Young 1996: 175-8). And as Klein notes:

Nike, Reebok, the Body Shop, Starbucks... the politics they have founded themselves with, which have made them rich – feminism, ecology, inner-city empowerment... are complex, essential social ideas, for which many people have spent lifetimes fighting (2002: 401).

Nike, a company which has long harnessed political concerns in its advertisements (Goldman and Papson 1998), took its politicking one step further in 1996 when it began to ‘graffiti’ its own billboard advertisements with messages of supposed ‘protest’ and to organise a fake ‘protest’ rally.\(^{52}\) Through these clever appropriations

---

\(^{52}\) In 1996, Nike advertised football boots in Melbourne by appropriating the desiring flows of anti-sweatshop (and, more specifically, anti-Nike) activism (see Carty 2001; Lasn 2001; Rebensdorf 2001). Responding to increasing pressure from protesters to improve conditions in its overseas factories, Nike created its own ‘activist’ billboard advertisements which showed an image of Nike football boots with
of anti-capitalist activism to market its products, Nike not only enhanced its brand value, but also diminished the power and potentiality of actual resistance.\(^{53}\)

Also concerning are the increasingly intimate relationships that are forming between capitalisms and art. Artists are regularly called upon to use their talents to promote consumer goods: to lend one brand of jeans or beer a creative edge over others. At the same time, corporations are taking on the role of art patron: sponsoring, purchasing, promoting and producing art and art-events. *Absolut* Vodka, for example, which regularly commissions well-known artists to produce designs for their advertisements, provides one of the most prominent examples of these dual processes at work (Sturken and Cartwright 2001). The company explicitly promotes itself as a key player in the contemporary art scene, and promotes its cultural ‘identity’ or ‘vision’ as one and the same as the revolutionary potential of the creative arts (see, for example, the company website ABSOLUT 2006: unpaginated).

As Klein (2002: 387) suggests, relationships such as these between corporations and art tend to produce a kind of corporate or logo ‘glow’: a radiant sheen which makes companies appear more healthy and rosy than they actually are. Corporate logos ‘have been burned into our brains by the finest image campaigns money can buy and, lifted a little closer to the sun by their sponsorship of much-loved cultural events, are perpetually bathed in a glow’ (387). This glow, which Klein (borrowing from science fiction writer Neal Stevenson) terms *loglo*, works to obscure the darker aspects of a corporation, pushing them, and issues of social justice more broadly, into the shadows. Klein suggests, for example, that ‘in the late seventies, as the loglo grew brighter, social-justice activism faded’ (387). Art’s involvement with capitalism does

---

the text: ‘The most offensive boots ever’ (figure 59). Using a clever play on the word ‘offensive’, the advertisements presented their shoes as the best on-ground attacking football boots available. Nike then went even further, ‘jamming’ their own billboards with graffiti reading “Fans For Fair Football say No Fair Mr Technology” and directing ‘concerned’ citizens to a Nike website which further explained how unfair such technologically advanced football shoes really are. Nike also staged a street protest in Melbourne’s CBD with participants waving placards and complaining about Nike’s ‘unfair’ shoe technology.

\(^{53}\) As an anti-Nike website called “Nice Inc’ explains: ‘This is truly frightening. What appears at first glance to be a community group concerned with the state of football turns out to be nothing other than a thin and deceptive marketing ploy…. it adds to the cynicism felt by ordinary citizens… it casts doubt on every other community group organising around principals of community concern… It makes a mockery of public democratic discourse… including our most cherished notion of ordinary people having a say in the decisions that affect them’ (Nice Inc 2000: unpaginated).
more than simply divert the energy of artists; it also helps to launder unethical corporate brands, giving them a cleaner, brighter – and more ‘revolutionary’ – public image, at the same time as diverting attention from substantive issues of politics and ethics (387-8).

Yet can revolutionary flows not also potentially be produced from within sites of capital? Because they work in and through the decoding of flows, capitalisms necessarily engender unexpected lines of rupture and flight – lines which are capable of forming revolutionary ‘war machines’ and challenging both the state and capitalisms (see for example Patton 2000: 7). Capitalism, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, ‘gives rise to numerous flows in all directions that escape its axiomatic’ (1987: 472-3); it is ‘leaking all over the place’ (Deleuze 2004: 270); ‘its lines of escape are not just difficulties that arise, they are the very conditions of its operation’ (270). Although most of the escaping flows are captured by the State or reterritorialised by capitalisms (ie: harnessed in advertising and marketing), some have the potential to gather momentum and link up with other flows to form broader, revolutionary movements of resistance or escape.

There is no doubt then that advertising images can – potentially – carry with them an artistic, revolutionary potential. As Bennett (2001) so effectively argues, even advertisements for companies implicated in human rights abuses can retain a revolutionary potential. Drawing on the example of a television advertisement for GAP Clothing, produced not long after the company was successfully sued for its reliance on indentured labour in Saipan, Bennett shows how advertisements can operate to produce a deterritorialising aesthetic affect in which our apparently stable world shifts beneath us, opening up a space for perceiving the world otherwise. In the advertisement, modern camera and computer technologies are used to temporarily freeze a group of swing dancers mid-dance, spin the room while the dancers remain frozen, and then unfreeze the dancers who resume their swinging in time to the continuing music. For Bennett, the ad draws attention to ‘the liveliness of matter itself’ (118). and, in doing so, produces a moment of simultaneous joy and unease, in which the potentiality of the world again opens up. To this deterritorialising affect, Bennett gives the term ‘enchantment’. Such enchantment ‘consists in a mixed bodily state of joy and disturbance, a transitory sensuous condition dense and intense enough

174
These moments of deterritorialised enchantment, including those offered through capitalist consumption and advertising, enable a kind of ethical posture or energy which is necessary for the formation of an ethics (128). As Bennett notes, ‘part of the energy needed to challenge injustice comes from the reservoir of enchantment – including that derived from commodities. For without enchantment, you might lack the impetus to act against the very injustices that you critically discern’ (128). To the extent that they enable new ways of perceiving the world (and relations between bodies, space, music and time) such moments of enchantment have the potential to disrupt unethical relations, including – potentially – those for which GAP itself has been implicated.

Bennett’s argument that an ethics can – perhaps even must – emerge from a kind of joyous deterritorialisation or ‘enchantment’ is an important one. It is from such an ethico-aesthetics, rather than from ethical or moral imperatives, that it becomes possible to bring forth a ‘people to come’. While I agree with Bennett that such an ethico-aesthetics is possible within capitalist advertising, I am less optimistic about the extent to which such sites can offer these revolutionary potentials. As Deleuze and Guattari admit, ‘all decoded flows, of whatever kind, are prone to forming a war machine… But everything changes depending on whether these flows connect up with a war machine or, on the contrary, enter into conjunctions or a general conjunction that appropriates them’ (1987: 459). To the extent that an advertising image constitutes an ‘art’ that has been produced under the conditions of a consumer capitalism – designed such that the deterritorialised flows that it engenders are channeled toward, rather than away from, capitalist consumption – its range of creative possibilities (its virtual potential) can be understood as being reduced, and its capacity to launch revolutionary deterritorialisations diminished. The forces of stratification and violence which are a ‘complementary’ part of capitalisms’ deterritorialisations are more likely to be obscured than rendered-visible through its vision. Certainly advertisements do work in ‘unpredictable’ ways (Bennett 2001: 113, 115), but sites of capital are, as I noted earlier, extremely good at appropriating escaping flows. They may not always succeed, but in most cases they do.
Although I agree that it is possible for an ethical and political posture to emerge from within commodity cultures (such as advertising), I believe that it is more crucial that minoritarian bodies find non-capitalist sites – or at least sites which constitute cracks or fissures within or between capitalist relations – from which to launch lines of flight. Revolutionary opposition, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest:

lies elsewhere: it is between, on the one hand, the decoded flows that enter into a class axiomatic on the full body of capital, and on the other hand, the decoded flows that free themselves from this axiomatic… that break through this wall… and begin flowing on the full body without organs (1983: 255)… it is by leaving the plan(e) of capital, and never ceasing to leave it, that a mass becomes increasingly revolutionary (1987: 472).

Rather than oppose capital, revolutionary forces must constitute ‘decoded flows that free themselves from this axiomatic’ (Patton 2000: 105), and through which other ways of connecting and perceiving become possible.

**An Ethico-Aesthetics of Capital**

Culture flirts entirely with bodies that I would call sterile… bodies that are not functional, that are deeply malfunctioning. I am thinking of two paradigms of what I would call the celibate or the sterile body: the anorexic and the drug addict. If you look at the representations of these bodies in fashion, for example, then this culture is really completely schizoid!... all these heroin ads… these bodies that are leaking… the junkie body leaks all over the place… these are socially desirable bodies, because they fit in with the social imperative of slimness and elegance, and some sort of consumptiveness… The absolute commodification and sterilisation of youth under those images… we are playing with fire here… and Deleuze would have very hard things to say against this junkie thing (Braidotti, year not given: unpaginated).

Braidotti’s suggestion that Deleuze would have had a lot of harsh things to say about heroin chic is probably correct. However, I do not think it would be due to heroin chic’s ‘sterility’ nor its (apparently contradictory) tendency to ‘leak all over the place’. Nor do I agree that the desiring-potential of heroin chic’s bodies emerges from their ability to fit in with fashion’s ideals of ‘slimness and elegance’. Deleuze’s work suggests an appreciation of the ways in which ‘leaky’ deterritorialising bodies such as
these can generate flows of desire and enable potentially revolutionary perceptual shifts. His work also compels, however, an awareness of the ways in which representational clichés can operate to stifle these artistic potentials, and a wariness of the capacity for sites of capital to offer very much in the way of ethico-aesthetic potential. Although heroin chic images contain within them potentials for becoming-other, their context as fashion advertisements render them far more likely to obscure, than render-visible, the forms of violent exploitation and oppression of minoritarian bodies, including of drug-using bodies, which are part and parcel of contemporary capitalism. And to the extent that they also reproduce a range of representational clichés, which generate a particular drug user faciality, they also work to stratify the ways in which drug-using bodies can be perceived, understood and connected to.

Together, these forces of stratification impact on the bodily capacities of those who use drugs, particularly in public urban space. In relation to capitalism, the marginalised body of the drug user is judged less according a moral code, and more according to an exchange potential: evaluated in relation to the flows of desire it might engender on the one hand and the flows of profit it may block on the other. And these evaluations are increasingly made based on particular clichéd perceptions of drug-using bodies. In Melbourne’s CBD, for example, we have seen how intensive policing operations are often spurred on by retailer complaints to the media about the negative impact of drug users on sales. The crackdown on minority bodies during the Commonwealth Games, also cannot be separated from attempts to maximise flows of tourism and retail consumption. Drug-using bodies are often well aware, in a bodily sense, of these ways in which urban space is shaped by flows of retail capital. As we saw in Chapter 3, many negotiate smooth movement through spaces of consumption by performing their bodies (dress, comportment, body shape) in particular ways. Others keep away from such spaces in order to avoid surveillance and police attention, preferring instead to inject in parks, universities or at home. As urban spaces in Melbourne become increasingly tied to consumer capitalism – as advertising billboards, giant TV screens, café seating, retail shops, and privately owned ‘public’ squares proliferate – these relations between bodies, urban spaces and flows of capital become increasingly important.
For many critics of heroin chic, the problem with the images is that they present drug use and the drug-using body as objects of aesthetics, rather than of ethics. Giroux, for example, writes: ‘Within the postmodern world of heroin chic fashion photography, the “other” is cast as an object of aesthetic consideration, a source of sensations rather than a serious object of moral evaluation and responsibility’ (1997: 25). What such an approach misses is that ethics and aesthetics are – and must be – connected. An embodied ethics does not emerge from rational judgment and moral reasoning, but from sensory, affective becomings, generated through an ethico-aesthetics. As Bennett suggests, we need an aesthetic, affective impetus if we are to develop a positive ethical life and to garner the energy and creativity to launch revolutionary movements of change.

This approach suggests a mode of ethical engagement, action and activism, that differs very much from that which relies on simple information-provision and rational decision-making. Consider, for example, the differences between two contemporary forms of alter-capitalist activism: ‘sabotage’ and ‘pranking’. Sabotage, typified by the billboard ‘jamming’ and advertisement ‘spoofing’ of Adbusters, involves overcoding advertising images and messages with more ‘truthful’ messages regarding the ‘hidden’ ethical and health implications of consuming that brand or product.

A pertinent example of this kind of sabotage is Adbusters’ response to ‘heroin chic’: a black and white ‘advertising’ image featuring a thin, naked young woman hunched over a toilet vomiting, and (in reference to a Calvin Klein perfume advertisement) the words ‘Obsession: For Women’ (see Figure 25). The image carried with it no ambiguities: its message – that the fashion and cosmetics industry is producing bulimia and body-image problems amongst women – is clear. As Harold, following Deleuze, suggests:

> despite its deconstructive sensibility, [such a strategy] perpetuates a commitment to rhetorical binaries – the hierarchical form it supposedly wants to upset… as negative critique [it] is not up to the task of undermining the… purchase on the Truth as it maintains a hierarchy of language and the protestor’s role as revealer (2004: 191).

---

54 This is a term I take from Chesters (2007). Unlike ‘anti-capitalism’ which suggests an oppositional politics, alter-capitalism affirms an alternative line of flight.
Because it operates through a commitment to ideals of ‘truth’, which capitalisms themselves have so long ago dispensed with, the sabotage style of protest favoured by groups such as ‘Adbusters’ has limited capacity to challenge the techniques of subversion and deterritorialisation favoured by contemporary advertising. As Harold notes:

> while the advertising sabotage articulated by Adbusters is not without some rhetorical value, it does little to address the rhetoric of contemporary marketing – a mode of power that is quite happy to oblige subversive rhetoric and shocking imagery… contemporary advertising is teeming with the language of revolution (2004: 191).

Sabotage is an important first step in critiquing and drawing attention to existing social relations. However it is reactionary, negative and oppositional by nature, and as such does little to generate an ethico-aesthetics.

‘Pranking’, by contrast, involves creative and artistic performances, interventions and installations which operate to deterritorialise perception. Such strategies work, as Harold (2004) suggests, ‘less through negation and opposition, than by playfully appropriating commercial rhetoric, both folding it over on itself and exaggerating its tropes’ (189). In doing so, such strategies are able – in the same way that capitalisms are able – to harness the desire-flows of the media and the consumer public.

A good example Harold gives of pranking is the Biotic Baking Brigade’s ‘cream-pie-to-the-face’ manoeuvre in which – reminiscent of old-style vaudeville pranks – cream pies are publicly launched upon the faces of prominent neoliberals and corporate leaders. Another, more pertinent example given is INFKT’s creative alter-tobacco campaign which challenged the influence of the cigarette industry in a very different way to the dominant ‘Just Say No’ campaigns. Acknowledging that ‘Nike’s provocation to “just do it” has proven far more compelling to young people than… [the] message of abstinence ever could be’ (203), INFKT harnessed young people’s ‘anti-authoritarian attitudes’ by encouraging them to take part in deterritorialising tobacco company claims. Instead of telling young people not to smoke, INFKT encouraged them to sabotage tobacco ads. The acts of sabotage themselves operated very much like those of Adbusters campaigns, but the crucial difference is that the
INFKT campaign involved activating the desire-flows of young people to be part of the prank.

The strength of pranking interventions such as these lies not in their ability to draw attention to the ‘realities’ of consumption, but in their ability to deterritorialise the relations of power that flow through capitalist assemblages: ‘by layering and folding the rhetorical field [it] addresses the patterns of power rather than its contents’ (Harold 2004: 209). They involve ‘an artful proliferation of messages, a rhetorical process of intervention and invention, which challenges the ability of corporate discourses to make meaning in predictable ways’ (192). Pranking thus constitutes what Deleuze and Guattari would call a minor practice (1987: 106, 361). Such a practice will, as O’Sullivan notes, ‘precisely stammer and stutter the commodity form, disassembling those already existing forms of capital and indeed moving beyond the latter’s very logic’ (2006: 73).

Simply drawing attention to the problems with consumption, or telling people not to consume certain products, images or substances for ethical or moral reasons, are strategies which will remain limited in their capacity to shape behaviour. Consumption is not a ‘rational’ event but an embodied one: involving both conscious and non-conscious processes. People enjoy consuming, be it products, images or drugs. Consumption generates and enables the same kinds of desire-flows and becomings as those which enable life to flow (Fitzgerald 2005: 569-71). Attempts to block these desire-flows are often bodily resisted. As Bennett notes, ‘The fear that changing the infrastructure of consumption would entail the end of pleasure in consumption’, might well, for example, ‘be one source of cultural resistance to the adoption of more eco-friendly ways of life’ (2001: unpaginated, note 14). Promoting asceticism, cynicism and negativity will only go so far in challenging existing modes of consumption, and will do little to promote an ethico-aesthetic style of life.

Government shock-tactic, anti-drug campaigns, such as the ‘ice’ advertisement example I began this thesis with, which present drug use in entirely negative terms and call for people to be ‘reasonable’ by abstaining from drugs, are also likely to have limited impacts on levels of drug use. Moreover, by calling upon bodies to refrain from experimenting with lines of flight and desire-flows, such ads are likely to...
deaden, rather than inspire, ethico-aesthetic modes of engagement with drug use – not only by those who consume drugs, but also the people around them. A more affective strategy must involve a shift from asceticism to an ethico-aesthetics in which ethically positive forms of drug consumption are rendered more affectively pleasurable. Doing so will involve not simply oppositional critique, but also the active creation of alternative opportunities for creativity, ‘enchantment’ and becomings.

A great example of an advertising campaign which makes use of this type of enchantment is the Australian Dairy Industry’s Milk, Its Legendary Stuff campaign which screened in Australia in 1998. In one of the advertisements which featured in the campaign, a couple of rugged and ‘blokey’ ‘Aussie’ men turn up to a barn dance. Declining offers of beer, the two men ask for tall glasses of milk which they consume joyfully while the beer-drinking crowd look on in amazement. The two men then dance the night away with their choice of women as one by one the drunken men pass out around them.

Despite being a commercial for milk, the advertisement provides a great marketing tool for an ethico-aesthetics of alcohol consumption. Rather than focusing on telling people not to drink, or showing them the dangerous or violent consequences of alcohol use, the advertisement focuses on presenting an alternative line of flight and drawing attention to the desiring assemblages which this line might make possible. The advertisement is humourous and enchanting, and is much more likely to inspire in bodies an ethico-aesthetic posture towards consumption than an one founded in negativity and asceticism. Such advertisements are also more likely to encourage a positive and joyful ethico-aesthetic approach to life and social relations more broadly. Through enchantment, harm minimisation might be able to engender an optimism and an openness to new encounters: movements which are likely to enhance, rather than diminish the capacity of bodies to affect the world and to be affected by it.
The end is for there to be no end, to turn collective existence into a repeatedly self-applied series of incorporeal transformations (Massumi 1992: 104).

Connecting the work of Deleuze and Guattari to drug use has brought with it an important difficulty: namely, that drug use is referred to by these writers in almost exclusively negative terms. While Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge the capacity for drugs to deterritorialise perception and movement, they almost exclusively employ the drug using body as a limit point example of the dangers of deterritorialisation: its potential to dismantle the body too quickly and too extremely, or to rigidify it into stratifications of habit. This negative determinism not only fails to resonate with my experiences of drug use and the drug use of those around me, but also contradicts Deleuze and Guattari’s own ethico-aesthetic philosophy. However, it does draw attention to the overwhelmingly negative way in which contemporary illicit drug use tends to be understood, discussed and responded to: that is, as an inherently destructive activity which carries with it nothing but risk and devastation.

Harm minimisation, explicitly formulated as a movement of negation (the reduction of harm) rather than one of positive affirmation (the increasing of bodily capacities), necessarily carries with it this tendency to focus on the harmful aspects of drug use. As such, it often tends – perhaps unwittingly – to overlook the ways in which pleasure, desire, sensation and perception shape, and can be shaped by, various assemblages of drug use. Bodies connect to the world, and to processes of differentiation, through the creation of assemblages which enable flows of desire. Such flows are crucial to life itself, and illicit drug use can be understood as one of the many ways in which bodies seek to unleash desire and access other possible ways of being. It may well be, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, one of the more dangerous and difficult ways to launch a successful becoming, but it is nonetheless a very normal, understandable process of desiring. Understanding how these becomings and desire-flows are mediated at the level of the drug-use assemblage is crucial to understanding the embodied, sensory ways in which those using drugs mediate risk.
and harm. To the extent that it neglects these aesthetic, desiring aspects of the assemblage, harm minimisation will – paradoxically – always be limited in its capacity to reduce harms, and is likely, in some cases, to inadvertently increase them.

Conceptualising harm minimisation in terms of desire – that is, as a practice which seeks to strategically open up some flows of desire while simultaneously reducing others – might enable a reaffirmation of the role of embodied sensation and desire in drug using assemblages, while retaining a commitment to improving outcomes for drug using bodies and those around them. For every ‘healthy’ change in behaviour which harm minimisation seeks to bring into being, some sort of desire-flow can be understood as necessarily having to be diverted or blocked. A shift away from the sharing of syringes, for example, to the collecting of new syringes from a local health service, can be understood as a shift which necessarily involves the blockage of those desire-flows which are particular to an assemblage of syringe-sharing. These may include desire-flows produced through: the sharing of a drug; the process of injecting one another; the intimate connection of two bodies via blood; the joy of risk-taking; the exhilaration of breaking the ‘rules’; the excitement of finding a used syringe in a laneway; the pleasure in becoming the clichéd junkie; and so on. Acknowledging these desire-flows means thinking about the shift away from sharing syringes as not simply a rational process of weighing up risk, but as a process which requires at least some kinds of personal sacrifice and loss. As Klein (1993) has noted in relation to cigarettes, for example: without appreciating the joyous value of smoking, and all the desire-flows which emerge from it, stopping can prove extremely difficult.

While ascetic self-denial can certainly carry with it its own pleasures (Coveney and Bunton 2003: 165; Lupton 1996: 135), these pleasures necessarily involve a kind of stratification of the self: a closing off of connections and a blocking of flows. As Coveney and Bunton also note, ‘ascetic pleasure is almost always a solitary pursuit and stands in stark contrast to forms of pleasure arising from collective ecstatic experiences’ (2003: 172). Yet the shifts toward ‘healthy’ behaviours sought by harm minimisation do not necessarily have to be based on asceticism. They can also be understood as involving the potential for opening up new flows of desire. The provision of clean injecting equipment, for example, can be understood as offering new sites of connection and interaction for those injecting drugs. Needle and syringe
programs can enable positive new forms of interpersonal connection with health workers and peers, and new forms of sociability amongst injectors. New desire-flows may be created, for example, through: the relationships developed with staff and other clients; the sharing of new injecting equipment amongst friends; the sharing of health information amongst peers; the sense of having a safe and respectful place to visit; or – in the case of street-outreach programs such as the Footpatrol in Melbourne – the thrill of engaging publicly in the mysterious and seemingly clandestine transaction of brown paper packages of syringes.

When conceptualising harm minimisation service provision in terms of flows of desire, it therefore becomes crucial that the socio-spatial context of any intervention be taken into consideration. It is important, more specifically, that the spaces of harm minimisation – such as supervised injecting facilities, methadone or heroin dispensing sites, drop-in health services, needle and syringe programs and syringe vending machines, and so on – are designed such that they are conducive with the opening up, rather than closing off, of new connections. Services, for example, which are too dirty or too cold and sterile, where clients are treated with contempt, or where they must wait for service in a separate queue on the street in front of a barred window, are likely to activate a range of negative, rigid stratifications, folds and blockages. Bodies naturally repel such obstructions upon desire, and clients are likely to avoid services which produce them, preferring instead the desire-flows found at other services, or – more dangerously – within assemblages of unsupervised injecting and syringe sharing. The spaces of harm minimisation are therefore crucial to its success and to the kinds of drug using bodies we hope to produce.

Also important are the everyday public, urban spaces in which bodies interact more generally. The ways in which we design, regulate and perform urban space has implications for the kinds of bodies – including drug using bodies – we enable. This means appreciating the aesthetic, sensory impact – positive and negative – that processes of urban cleansing, gentrification and renewal can have on bodies. It also means recognising the ways in which the presence of police, sniffer dogs, security guards and surveillance cameras shape the aesthetic sense – and the ethico-aesthetic potentials – of urban space. Such striations can provide, at least for some people, a sense of security, but they necessarily do so at some cost to socio-spatial relations and
bodily potentials. Security interventions not only impact on people when they are directly questioned, searched, restrained, fined, or arrested; through their capacity to striate and limit movement, creativity and inter-personal connection, they necessarily affect every person using urban space in a virtual, yet very real sense. There is a fine line, therefore, between creating a sense of order and creating a stifling sense of being in a security-driven, ‘police’ state. Being aware of these potential affects does not mean removing all security measures; indeed some are crucial to the sustainable and safe use of space. However it does mean being sensitive to the aesthetic impact of various security and policing strategies upon bodies – not only upon those using drugs but upon all who use urban space.

If we are to produce an ethico-aesthetics of urban space, however, greater effort will also need to be put into the active production of positive, affirmative urban assemblages which enable new encounters. Temporary public art installations, including public memorials, offer examples of spatial interventions which have the potential to enable new, more positive, connections between bodies. An ethico-aesthetics of urban art necessitates a sensitivity to the ways in which sensation, memory, time and space – as pure, undifferentiated and potentially revolutionary forces – can easily come to be overcoded and stratified within sites of public art. Installations which are ‘safe’ and recognisable, which represent or symbolise something, or which fail to open out onto an unknown outside or future, will do little to shift current ways of being and relating. To bring forth a ‘people to come’ public art must not simply draw attention to an existing mode of being, but actively generate minoritarian forces of becoming: nomadic forms of memory, perception and sensation. It must, in other words, not simply render-perceptible that which already exists, but render-perceptible new, minoritarian modes of perception.

An ethico-aesthetic approach to harm minimisation also means acknowledging and harnessing the desire-flows which run through educational interventions, including those at the level of the school, within localised peer education, and in larger governmental advertising interventions. By going beyond simple language-based, knowledge-transfer approaches, and using sensory, aesthetic forms of information delivery, educational programs can more affectively engage people on an embodied, non-conscious level. In doing so, however, such aesthetic forms of engagement need
to ensure that they engage with a positive ethics based on affirmation, rather than nihilism, and focused on maximising, rather than reducing, bodily capacity. Negative shock-tactic advertisements, for example, have a significant aesthetic impact. However, their aesthetics tends to be tied to a morality which presupposes that all drug use is inherently bad, and an epistemology which seeks to shift knowledge and behaviour through fear, rather than positive affirmation. As such, they tend to produce alarm, stigma and division, thereby working to block positive new connections between people. They also – at the other extreme – have the potential to catalyse those flows of desire which emerge from the chaos of the destratifying body: perhaps even producing forms of what Bell and Valentine (1997: 202) refer to as ‘pleasure revenge’, whereby risky, unauthorised pleasures come to be used as a way of escaping an overly stratified existence. Such advertisements thereby tend to inadvertently encourage dangerous forms of drug consumption on the one hand, while producing hard-line avoidance, blockages and closure on the other.

Negative educational programs which pressure people to ‘say no’ to drugs, and use harsh examples of what can happen if illicit drugs are used in order to encourage students to ‘rationally and reasonably’ abstain, are similarly problematic. Such programs are likely to simply draw attention to the disjuncture between the forbidden desire-flows of illicit drugs on the one hand, and the rigid blockage of desire offered by abstinence on the other. Educational programs might instead do well to explicitly acknowledge the desire-flows that emerge from illicit drug-use assemblages, thereby rendering those flows more knowable and mundane, while at the same time drawing attention to the ways in which these assemblages can also lead to blockages, such as overdose, blood borne viruses, infections, and arrest. Instead of presenting abstinence as an ascetic, moral necessity, such programs could instead focus on producing an ethico-aesthetics of being-in-the-world: drawing attention to the ways in which the dangers of drug use (such as overdose and blood-borne viruses) might be reduced, while also actively celebrating the desire-flows which are to be found in diverse other assemblages and relations. In this way, those who do end up experimenting with drug use assemblages will be better skilled to negotiate the risks, and those who abstain will not be basing their abstinence on an ascetic moral framework of denial, but on an affirmation of a different trajectory of common desire. And by learning to appreciate the common desire-flows which run through different types of assemblages, people
will be likely to feel less separation from those who, for whatever reason, do use drugs.

The images and words that we use when dealing with illicit drug use – whether in schools, government health promotion campaigns, the media, or research – also have implications for an ethico-aesthetics of harm minimisation. Referring to those who use drugs as ‘addicts’, ‘junkies’ or ‘drug abusers’, for example, creates a particularly negative and rigid sense of the drug-using body, and works to block transformative lines of escape and positive connections with others. Producing and reproducing images of drug-using bodies as diseased, dangerous, psychotic, criminal, or violent, will likewise block future connections and becomings-other. This does not mean that the dangers of illicit drug use – its capacity, in some cases, to catalyse violence or psychosis, or to lead to habit, infection, criminalisation or death – should not be acknowledged. Instead it means developing a sensitivity to the affects of conflating these trajectories with drug use per se, and – in doing so – fostering an ethics of care around the ways in which the drug using body is aesthetically enacted and re-enacted.

In each of these cases, there is no clear way of determining where exactly an ethical line is to be drawn. An ethico-aesthetics will not dictate once and for all which assemblages, spaces or relations are good and which are bad. Deleuze and Guattari certainly prioritise assemblages which open up, rather than reduce flows: assemblages which maximise the potential for difference, change and creativity. However they also acknowledge the need for some balance: the importance of retaining some folds to prevent the body from destratifying completely; of producing some holey spaces which combine the structure of striations with the chaos of the smooth; and of nurturing some refrains whose comforting territoriality can provide a launching-space toward an unknown future. For me, these in-betweens are key. An ethico-aesthetics of harm minimisation will therefore work less with absolutes or extremes than with trajectories and tendencies. It will render-perceptible the ways in which sensation, desire and perception shape bodily potentials. What one does with this new awareness is a matter for each of us, and depends on the kinds of ways-of-being in the world that we want to foster. These ‘ways of existing’, or what Deleuze also refers to as ‘styles of life’ (1995: 100), affect not only our own capacities, but the capacities of the bodies around us, and our collective ability to bring forth a new future.
References


Bell, David and Valentine, Gillian (1997) Consuming Geographies: We are Where We Eat, London: Routledge.


Fitzgerald, John; Broad, Sandra and Dare, Andrew (1999) Regulating the Street Heroin Market in Fitzroy/Collingwood, Melbourne: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation.


Hillier, Lynne and Mitchell, Anne (2008) “‘It was as useful as a chocolate kettle’: sex education in the lives of same-sex-attracted young people in Australia”, *Sex Education* 8(2): 211-24.


Keane, Helen (2005) “Moral frameworks, ethical engagement and harm reduction: commentary on ‘Ethical challenges and responses in harm reduction research:


Young, Iris Marion (1990) Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Philosophy and Social Theory, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.


Appendix 1. Interview Methodology

For Chapter 3, I interviewed 11 women who currently inject drugs in Melbourne’s Central Business District (CBD). Recruitment took place via the Foot Patrol Needle and Syringe Program outreach service, where I had previously worked on a casual basis. I accompanied the Footpatrol staff on several of their day-time, week-day outreach shifts, and women clients were invited to participate by the staff of the outreach service, and were offered $20 and a hot drink for their time. Most of the women who were approached agreed to participate. Interviews took place in various CBD cafés. Each interview was semi-structured around a range of themes relating to: background info; experiences of the city in general; experiences of injecting in city space; spatial preferences for injecting; overdoses; police; other people in the city; and safe injecting facilities. Interviews were digitally audio-recorded and each lasted approximately one hour. A table outlining participant demographics appears on the following page. Informed consent was obtained and recorded verbally. The research was approved by the University of Melbourne’s Human Research Ethics Committee.

I chose to interview only female injectors for a range of methodological reasons. First, I wanted to work against the historical tendency to ignore women’s narratives and voices in drugs research, and presenting female narratives alone helps to preclude the tendency to compare and contrast gendered narratives (which are by their very nature fluid and multiple). Second, focusing on women’s narratives alone works to embed gender within the analysis itself, thereby constituting an ‘affirmation of gendered corporeality’ (Ettorre 2007: 236) in and of itself, drawing attention to ‘the subtle and often hidden and unexpected ways that gender infiltrates all areas of the lives of drug users’ (Ettorre 2004: 329), and to the movements of gendered becoming that surpass the striations of Man and Woman. Third, as a young female researcher I felt more comfortable recruiting and interviewing female participants by myself in the city. And forth, focusing on women’s narratives necessitates a movement of becoming-woman, which is perhaps the primary step in any sequence of revolutionary becomings.
**Participant Details**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee Number</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years spent injecting</th>
<th>Years spent injecting in CBD</th>
<th>Days per week currently injecting in CBD</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>Anglo-Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Anglo-Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Italian-Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Anglo-Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Anglo-Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>Anglo-Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Anglo-Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Indigenous-Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>Anglo-Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Anglo-Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Greek-Australian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Author/s:  
Malins, Peta Husper

Title:  
An ethico-aesthetics of injecting drug use:  body, space, memory, capital

Date:  
2009

Citation:  

Publication Status:  
Unpublished

Persistent Link:  
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/35163

File Description:  
An ethico-aesthetics of injecting drug use:  body, space, memory, capital

Terms and Conditions:  
Terms and Conditions: Copyright in works deposited in Minerva Access is retained by the copyright owner. The work may not be altered without permission from the copyright owner. Readers may only download, print and save electronic copies of whole works for their own personal non-commercial use. Any use that exceeds these limits requires permission from the copyright owner. Attribution is essential when quoting or paraphrasing from these works.