

Libidinal Parasites: Netporn and the Machinic Excess

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A widespread taste for pornography means that nature is alerting us to some threat of extinction.
— J.G. Ballard, "News from the Sun"¹

Perhaps violence, like pornography, is some kind of an evolutionary standby system, a last-resort device for throwing a wild joker into the game?
— J.G. Ballard, *Myths of the Near Future*²

1. Porn on Diazepam and the Technopathology of Immaterial Labour

Many Western intellectuals reassure us that pornography is nothing but the ultimate embodiment of the society of spectacle and late capitalist commodification (Baudrillard, Žižek, and also Agamben to name only few).³ They say that it is not politically liberating, nor particularly dangerous. In the world of radical theory and critical philosophy, there is clearly an attempt to sanitise pornography, while simultaneously, the rise of a politically-correct pornography and a new spectrum of subcultural flavours (the so-called *indie porn* or *alt porn*) have the effect of neutralising its obscenity potential.⁴ While a possible comparison can be drawn to the inflationary processes in the mediasphere, however one acknowledges it: contemporary porn is less 'pornographic'. Interestingly, there is no genealogical attempt to understand why we talk so much about pornography today or why we observe a pervasive *pornification* of the collective imaginary (what has been ironically dubbed as the 'rise of the netporn society').⁵

Discourses on porn can be categorised respectively around moral complaints, fervent subcultures and minimizing cultural theory. The last ones, in particular, still smell of postmodernist Diazepam (aka Valium), if we can define postmodernism as a sort of intellectual response to Western anxiety. Ballard, however, grasps the contemporary psychosphere better than any PoMo philosopher and provides a less comfortable scenario, when he states: "a widespread taste for pornography means

that nature is alerting us to some threat of extinction".⁶ Ballard's warning recalls the libidinal breakdown he depicts in his novels — the breakdown of an Empire at its sunset. But what is the reason behind such a bankruptcy of desire? In the last half century, pornography has become ubiquitous, a mass commodity (and a public utility, why not?) that is almost free in the age of the Internet. Pornography itself can be considered the ultimate by-product of an exhausted technological Empire: an 'affective commodity' for an everyday life that absorbs vast amounts of social energy. The gnostic utopia of media culture typically obscures the dark side of digital networks and does not track the circulation of such by-products. Fortunately, the Internet managed to map and expose all the shadows of the collective unconscious point-to-point. 'Technopathology' may be the name of this under-investigated field of research: a crucial but still emerging discipline carried on by a few pioneers, like Mark Dery, for instance, a modern Virgilio of the Internet *Inferno* (with books such as *Escape Velocity* and *The Pyrotechnic Insanitarium*).⁷

Moreover, Ballard reminds us how our ancestral reproductive instincts have not been suffocated by the progressive stratification of technology: it finds anyway a path through the channels of a pervasive mediascape to devour pornography. Ballard keeps his antenna tuned to the frequencies of the collective unconscious, but is elusive about the genealogy of such a global temperament. Less ancestral but no less dystopian, another *technopathologist*, Franco 'Bifo' Berardi, clearly connects the proliferation of pornography to the digital revolution which has absorbed our bodies in a completely virtualised mode of communication at the expense of natural sensuality. "In the saturated infosphere the immediate way of perception of the body is pornography"⁸, Berardi claims:

The electronic excitation conveyed through the entire Mediascape puts the sensitive organism in a state of permanent electrocution. Time for linguistic elaboration of a single input is reduced as the number of inputs increase, and the speed of the input gets higher. Sex is not speaking anymore. It is rather babbling, and faltering, and it is also suffering of for it. Too few words, too little time to talk. Too little time to feel. Porn is an essay in emotional automation and uniformity of emotional time of response. Don't miss the implication between permanent electrocution, shortening of linguistic attentive elaboration, atrophy of emotional response. Pornography is just the VISIBLE surface of this neuro short-circuit. The connective generation is showing signs of an epidemic of emotional atrophy. The disconnection between language and sexuality is striking. Pornography is the ultimate form of this disconnection.⁹

Berardi seems sceptical about the adaptability of humankind to a new technological environment. Ballard, on the contrary, suggests that pornography (or any violent phenomenon like that) might be precisely the 'wild joker' thrown into the genetic game to trigger a different destiny. However, we should not exclude the possibility that a new generation of human beings will eventually develop the cognitive and physical skills needed to adapt their sex lives to this over-stimulating mediascape. For now, it is clear that Internet pornography is the dark side (or grey side) of an heavily computer-based mode of economic production, a side effect of the cognitive energies coopted by the post-Fordist revolution of digital machines. Considering the statistical evidence on hand, immaterial labour and network society should no longer be mentioned without netporn as well.¹⁰

2. Thermodynamics of Pornography

Usually pornography is defended on the basis of a paradigm of free expression and free speech — they used to say, we don't need theory to deal with our bodies. On the contrary, the pornography debate unconsciously applies different models of pleasure and desire. Even when we are defending free expression with the typical liberal detachment, we are using a specific model of pleasure each time. Generally speaking, two distinct schools can be introduced: those who believe that libido is a *limited energy* and those who believe that libido is an *endless flux*. Deleuze (following Nietzsche against Freud) introduced desire as an affirmative repetition in his book on masochism, *Présentation de Sacher-Masoch*.¹¹ Freud, on the other hand, considered obsessive repetition as a manifestation of the death drive in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (and obsession consistently returns even in the discourse around netporn).¹² In the following works with Félix Guattari, however, Deleuze's notion of desire embraces an ever-expanding *machinic* Spinozism (starting with the book *Anti-Oedipus*). Berardi criticises Deleuze and Guattari specifically because they did not foresee depression as a natural consequence of their *schizo* enthusiasm¹³ — even if somehow they covered depression in the chapter “How Do You Make Yourself a Body without Organs?”¹⁴, where different typologies of body are introduced (hypochondriac body, paranoid body, schizo-body, drugged body, masochist body, etc.). The basic assumption behind Berardi's position is that libidinal energy is limited and that we simply cannot party all the time.

There is no reason why a 'flux' should be strictly framed as a physical or biological flow of matter (and therefore 'measured' as limited). However, it could be interesting to re-design a thermodynamics of desire after Deleuze and Guattari and their hydraulics of feelings, machines and flows. If the First Law of Thermodynamics is applied to the human libido, it could be translated as: “In any process, the total desire remains constant”. And the Second Law (more interestingly) should read: “The entropy of desire constantly increases” — in other words, it means that our energy eventually goes senile. Pornography is unconsciously framed by its detractors as an assault on the whole energy capital of an individual or society. There is a sort of thermodynamic parsimony applied by right-wing censors or left-wing sceptics to the consumerism of pornography. But even porn producers and heavy downloaders know that porn cannot be consumed under unlimited conditions. Curiously, the 'meaning' of porn imagery is directly connected to our degree of physical excitement: have you ever tried to watch a porn movie at breakfast time? For most, the libidinal 'significance' vanishes. Porn images are quite peculiar, they speak to our animal scopophilia — a sort of ancestral cinema for our reptilian nervous system. It is impossible to judge a pornographic image according to a moral register simply because each one has a completely different quality (and quantity) of libidinal desire. Both pansexuality and asexuality should be tolerated, along with high and low degrees of libidinal excitement.

Pornographic images are both consumed and produced by our flows of desire. How to deal with this libidinal economy? Before an aesthetics of porn, there should be a materialist ethics of energies and forces. This scenario is never simply binary. For example, between the school of *endless flux* on the one side, and the school of *limited libido* on the other, we can situate Bataille and his human drive for excess. In Bataille, sexual instincts constantly challenge and destroy human identity; they are tied to a double-bind with beauty and animality, unable to escape contradictions and impossible to be reduced to a quasi-thermodynamic paradigm.¹⁵

There is never equilibrium according to the second law of the thermodynamics of desire. Even when we defend pornography we deal with a desire that it is never definable and predictable. As Deleuze and Guattari observe, “technical machines only work if they are not out of order. Desiring machines on the contrary continually break down as they run, and in fact run only when they are not functioning properly”.¹⁶ There is always a *surplus* of libido drifting around. Picturing the materialistic forces behind desire would be an interesting experiment for an ‘ethics of porn’. However, as Andrew Ross brilliantly put it, it is difficult to civilise desire:

Finally, we must take into account the possibility that a large part of pornography’s popularity lies in its refusal to be educated; it therefore has a large stake in celebrating delinquency and wayward or unauthorized behavior, and in this respect is akin to cultural forms like heavy metal music, whose definitive, utopian theme, after all, is “school’s out forever”. To refuse to be educated: to refuse to be taught lessons about maturity and adult responsibility, let alone about sexism and racism; to be naughty, even bad, but mostly naughty; to be on your worst behavior — all of this may be a ruse of patriarchy, a ruse of capitalism, but it also has something to do with a resistance to education, institutional or otherwise. It has something to do with a resistance to those whose patronizing power and missionary ardor are the privileges bestowed upon and instilled in them by a legitimate education. Surely there is a warning here for intellectuals who are committed today, as always, to “improving” the sentimental education of the populace.¹⁷

3. Entropy of Desire and Negentropy of Machines

Digital machines have always been framed as symmetrical devices, where energy goes in and gets out, where input energetically equals to output, according to a widespread belief in the smooth, free and effortless reproducibility of binary data. Media culture (and most successfully digital music¹⁸) tried to focus on the status of errors and glitches but only within the combinatorial structure of the digital code (a claustrophobic perspective with no attention to the biological and analogue context that machines have to inhabit). At the beginning of ‘machine criticism’ and dystopian literature, decades before the proliferation of Turing machines, Samuel Butler claimed a *continuum* between organic and machinic world in his novel *Erewhon*¹⁹. As McLuhan comments: “as early as 1872, Samuel Butler’s *Erewhon* explored the curious ways in which machines were coming to resemble organisms not only in the way they obtained power by digestion of fuel but in their capacity to evolve ever new types of themselves with the help of the machine tenders. The organic character of the machines, he saw, was more than matched by the speed with which people who minded them were taking on the rigidity and thoughtless behaviourism of the machine”.²⁰

An entropic model of netporn is useful for demonstrating how the dominant techno-paradigm is partial in its fetishism of digital code and abstract spaces: there is always a dissipation of energy, a ‘nihilist impulse’ that also affects machines. However, the opposite process is actually more interesting: living energy constantly accumulates against natural entropy, what Erwin Schrödinger in his book *What is Life?* calls *negentropy*, a dynamic that makes a biological model more intriguing than a thermodynamic one.²¹ Machines like organic cells consume and dissipate energy, but at the same time they are able to accumulate, condense and store energy. Both

material and immaterial objects produced by machines can be considered concretions of energy. Machines are usually defined as devices that transmit or *transform* energy, and more importantly, that *store* energy. However, I am not suggesting that machines belong to a separate autonomous realm as in a predictable science fiction narrative. Media *and* humans have been always interconnected in a collective system of communication that functions as a big condenser of information and attractor of attention. Networks can be seen as a massive device for accumulation, re-distribution and storage of energy. Networks expand everyday; when they reach a critical mass or threshold, they trigger a new process, like a new biological species. The Internet itself has grown from BBS to Second Life, and its form of organisation has passed through different stages of accumulation, condensation, hegemony and crisis.

Following the desiring capitalism of *Anti-Oedipus*, Hardt and Negri depict the affective dimension of contemporary production in *Empire* and other works on 'affective labour'.²² What they call 'biopolitical production' translates Deleuze and Guattari's 'desiring production', but with the difference that Hardt and Negri emphasize the conflict of living labour in order to give a tensive arrow to an "immanent plane of desire" that otherwise would appear too indeterminate:

Deleuze and Guattari discover the productivity of social reproduction (creative production, production of values, social relations, affects, becomings), but manage to articulate it only superficially and ephemerally, as a chaotic, indeterminate horizon marked by the ungraspable event.²³

Hardt and Negri's ontology is not specific regarding the full spectrum of affective production and does not cover many perverted, contradicting and obscure feelings in the contemporary psychosphere (including the so-called 'dark side of the multitude' and its amphibious nature).²⁴ In any case, even with respect to Deleuze and Guattari's intuitions, these dirty engines should be inspected more carefully to grasp the extraction of a *libidinal surplus-value*. What defines a machine (or a network) is always a relation to a surplus. Media, like biological organisms, function in an unclean and viscous way – eating and defecating – but there is always an unforeseen tension towards accumulation of new energy. Actually, Deleuze and Guattari originally introduced three kinds of desiring machines and not simply one: desiring machines that produce, cut or consume. It seems that only a generic type met public success. Their mechanosphere indeed frames capitalism in quite a complex scenario, crossed by a chaotic interlacement of flows, on the basis of a continuous energy streaming from above. For Deleuze and Guattari, desire is an infinite flux.

[...] every machine is a machine of a machine. The machine produces an interruption of the flow only insofar as it is connected to another machine that supposedly produces this flow. And doubtless this second machine in turn is really an interruption or break, too. But is such only in relationship to a third machine that is ideally — that is to say, relatively — produces a continuous, infinite flux: for example, the anus-machine and the intestine-machine, the intestine-machine and the stomach-machine, the stomach-machine and the mouth machine, the mouth machine and the flow of milk of a herd of dairy cattle ("and then, and then, and then..."). In a word, every machine functions as a break in the flow in relation to the machine in which it is connected, but at the same time is also a flow itself, or the production of a flow, in relation to the machine connected to it. This is the law of the production of production.²⁵

Here, Deleuze and Guattari focus more directly on the assemblage of machines and production than the accumulation of energy. The libidinal 'accumulation' (in the form of collective investment) takes place around paranoid poles (the Father, the Family, the State, etc.).

Which function do media accomplish in a scenario of widespread libidinal accumulation? Traditionally, media have been described as information channels, body prostheses and mimetic devices. I try to frame them as libidinal organisms, more specifically, as symbionts, or even better *libidinal parasites*, under the concept of the extraction and accumulation of libidinal surplus-value. Surplus-value is another way of describing the excess of energy and its exploitation or enjoyment. Libidinal surplus-value specifically refers to the tension that drives the media economy and its evolution. For instance, Internet porn videos can be framed as symbiotic organisms that are a structural part of digital networks. The simulacra of pop stars may be considered affective parasites too. Indeed, 'spectacular' machines work as parasites because they channel and accumulate our libido in a highly physical way. Media parasites absorb our libidinal energies as a surplus and condense it in the form of attention and fetishism towards brands, technology, material and immaterial commodities. By the word *parasite*, no moral judgement is implied: perhaps libidinal parasites are just a new generation of organisms (together with 'emotional media' and 'affective commodities') that we are just starting to become familiar with.

In *The Parasite*, Michel Serres described human relations as a never-ending parasitic chain: "the parasite parasites the parasite".²⁶ Each organism is a parasite of another. Human beings are parasites of nature. The global communication system itself is a parasitic system. What is missing in this picture of the parasite, however, is the accumulation and extraction of a surplus typical of any form of life (and organisation). Here, I suggest introducing the concept of parasite as an engine of accumulation rather than an element of 'pure mediality'.²⁷

4. Vortices Accumulating Crystals of Time

What has to be clarified by the critical discourse around communication machines (i.e. media culture and media activism) is that they are never a neutral tool for free speech, free culture and free cooperation. A serene and peaceful scenario is never given: they incessantly accumulate energy below the surface. The accumulation of surplus-value in any form (libido, attention, information, data, even electricity) and its breaking-point should be the political focus of a critical media culture, as much as any discourse about *free cooperation* and *free culture*.²⁸ Of course, all the forms of *collective intelligence* and *creative commons* driven by technology may represent a real hazard against the capitalistic accumulation of surplus-value, but beyond or beneath the immaterial layer there is always a material by-parasite that is never seriously confronted. The interesting part of the movie *The Matrix* (to indulge in a plot that everybody knows) is less the virtual reality game than the parasitic role of the digital world above the human bodies: in the year 2199, intelligent machines have taken control on human beings and exploit them as an energy source, growing countless people in pods and harvesting their bioelectrical energy and body heat. Accumulation still runs despite, or possibly thanks to, digital *commonism*.

To adapt the standard Foucauldian paradigm, these molecular and pervasive parasites embody a biopolitical function previously performed only by old media and institutions on a broader scale. In his book *Videofilosofia*, Maurizio Lazzarato is even more specific when he describes how electronic technologies freeze 'crystals of time' out of the living time of their users — those 'crystals' are moving images that become part of the immaterial assembly line of post-Fordism.

The central hypothesis around which our work is organized is that *electronic and digital machines, as well as intellectual labour, «crystallise time»*. [...] Image is never something that works upon lack, absence, negativity. Image is not something added to the real to represent it, but it is the texture itself of the being.²⁹

Here, Lazzarato frames video-electronic media as autonomous engines able to produce and accumulate time in the same way as memory and imagination. The accumulation of 'crystals of time' through moving images is a key insight that Lazzarato explores at the same time *Lavoro immateriale* was published (whereas only an abstract understanding of the concept of immaterial labour has been well received). Following Bergson and Deleuze, Lazzarato develops a sophisticated notion of the *moving image* that is no longer the flat simulation of postmodernism, but a device screwed into flesh and reality. I take the concept of video technologies as engines of time accumulation to introduce them as parasites of libidinal accumulation: where Lazzarato situates duration and time we introduce desire and libidinal energy.

Electronic and digital technologies (but even the cinema) are «mechanics» that *autonomously produce image*. Retaking one of Simondon's intuitions, instead of defining them as simply external extensions of the senses of the human being (as a lens in respect to an eye), they should be understood as "engines" capable of a "relative autonomy" in respect to the man. Different from mechanical and thermodynamic engines «that take a [kinetic and potential] energy from the outside», they are indeed engines that accumulate duration and time. And if memory and imagination can be defined as «organic engines» that *accumulate and produce time*, video technology and computers may be defined as non-organic engines that work upon the same principle.³⁰

Out of any virtual reality dream, back to the analogue world, each media assemblage becomes a large or small vortex of accumulation, each device an energy parasite. Time and desire are attracted and crystallised, and then transformed and condensed into other forms. It has to be clearly pointed out that parasites are never 'immaterial' – they always transform our fluxes in something tangible. Netporn converts libidinal flows into money and siphons a huge bandwidth on a global scale daily. Netporn transforms libido into pure electricity: exactly as filesharing networks are reincarnated as an army of MP3 players, Free Software helps to sell more IBM hardware and Second Life avatars consume as much electricity as the average Brazilian.³¹ Libidinal surplus is extracted and channelled across the technological infrastructure and invested back into the infrastructure itself, into the imagery or into other devices connected to and dependant upon that network. Accumulation of libidinal surplus is easily turned into money, attention, visibility, spectacle, material and immaterial commodities.

5. Libidinal Parasites and the Accumulation of Libidinal Surplus

This overview attempts to encapsulate some concepts around the notions of energy surplus and desire, investigating entropy and negentropy within the media biosphere. Moving from Marx's accumulation of surplus-value to Bataille's excess, and from Deleuze and Guattari's desiring production to Schrödinger's negentropy, I have tried to condense a nodal point in the theoretical figure of the libidinal parasite. To escape the impasses of the current media theory, I have suggested a definition of machine (or network) as something always in relation to an external surplus and not as a virtual system held apart or abstracted from material concerns. Following Michel Serres, we can describe the entire mediascape as a parasitic chain. The field is vast and we need a more detailed cartography to properly investigate different intuitions, such as Ballard's visions about the ancestral instincts of media or Berardi's 'pathologies of hyper-expressivity' — all of them affecting the contemporary mediascape. Personally, I focused on Internet pornography as a radical case of the extraction of libidinal surplus-value in the society of the spectacle.

Pornography could be considered the ultimate commodity because the instinct of the Species has become the basis for the extraction of surplus-value by the mega-Machine — there is something truly apocalyptic in this. And there is also something totalitarian in the way the netporn infrastructure is supported mainly by the 'flows' of male libido. Despite the rise of *alt porn* and the activism of queer communities, pornography remains mainly the business of a male audience and a female (usually exploited) workforce. Generally, either in the context of softcore advertisements or hardcore pornography, this sexual desire reinforces the new electronic superstructure of humankind. Ultimately, porn might be concerned with the preservation and reproduction of humanity as much as any fundamentalist church, even in the form of a wild joker.

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¹ James G. Ballard, "News From the Sun", 1981, in: James G. Ballard, *The Complete Short Stories*, London: Flamingo, 2001.

² James G. Ballard, *Myths of the Near Future*, London: Cape, 1982.

³ Giorgio Agamben, *La comunità che viene*, Torino: Einaudi, 1990. Trans.: *The Coming Community*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991. "To appropriate the historic transformations of human nature that capitalism wants to limit to the spectacle, to link together image and body in a space where they can no longer be separated, and thus to forge the whatever body, whose *physis* is resemblance—this is the good that humanity must learn how to wrest from commodities in their decline. Advertising and pornography, which escort the commodity to the grave like hired mourners, are the unknowing midwives of this new body of humanity". See also: Jean Baudrillard, "What Are You Doing After the Orgy?", *Traverses* n. 29 (Oct. 1983); Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, London: Verso, 1997; Slavoj Žižek, "No Sex, Please, We're Digital!", in: *On Belief*, New York: Routledge, 2001.

⁴ See Florian Cramer, "Sodom Blogging: Alternative Porn and Aesthetic Sensibility", in K. Jacobs, M. Pasquinelli (eds), *C'Lick Me: A Netporn Studies Reader*, Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2007.

⁵ One of the definition proposed by "The Art and Politics of Netporn" conference, Amsterdam, 2005, www.networkcultures.org/netporn

⁶ James G. Ballard, "News From the Sun", cit.

⁷ Mark Dery, *The Pyrotechnic Insanitarium: American Culture on the Brink*. New York: Grove, 1999. And: Mark Dery, *Escape Velocity: Cyberculture at the End of the Century*. New York: Grove, 1996.

⁸ Franco 'Bifo' Berardi, "The Obsession of the (Vanishing) Body", in *C'Lick Me: A Netporn Studies Reader*, cit.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ See for instance: "Caslon Analytics: adult content industries" report, accessed June 2008, www.caslon.com.au/xcontentprofile.htm

¹¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Présentation de Sacher-Masoch: le froid et le cruel*, Paris: Minuit, 1967.

¹² Sigmund Freud, *Jenseits des Lustprinzips*, Leipzig: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag. 1920.

¹³ Franco 'Bifo' Berardi, *Félix*, Roma: Luca Sossella Editore, 2001.

¹⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, Paris: Minuit, 1980.

¹⁵ Georges Batailles, *L'érotisme*, Paris: Minuit, 1967.

¹⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, Paris: Minuit, 1972.

¹⁷ Andrew Ross, *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture*, New York: Routledge, 1989.

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- ¹⁸ See: Kim Cascone, "The Aesthetics of Failure: Post-Digital Tendencies in Contemporary Computer Music", in *Computer Music Journal* (Vol. 24, No. 4, Winter 2000), MIT Press.
- ¹⁹ Samuel Butler, *Erewhon, or Over the Range*, 1872.
- ²⁰ Marshall McLuhan, *The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man*. New York: Vanguard Press, 1951.
- ²¹ Erwin Schrödinger, *What is Life? The Physical Aspect of the Living Cell*, Cambridge: University Press, 1948.
- ²² Michael Hardt, "Affective labour", in *Boundary 2* (vol. 26, no. 2, Summer 1999). And: Antonio Negri, "Value and Affect", in *Boundary 2* (vol. 26, no. 2, Summer 1999).
- ²³ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- ²⁴ Virno, Paolo. "So-called «evil» and criticism of the state", in: *Multitude Between Innovation and Negation*, Los Angeles: Semiotexte, 2008. Original version: "Il cosiddetto «male» e la critica dello Stato", *Forme di vita*, n. 4, Roma: Derive Approdi, 2005.
- ²⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, cit.
- ²⁶ Michel Serres, *Le Parasite*, Paris: Grasset, 1980. Trans.: *The Parasite*, London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982.
- ²⁷ As "pure mediality" in: Stephen Crocker, "Noises and Exceptions: Pure Mediality in Serres and Agamben", *Ctheory* (28 Mar. 2007), www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=574
- ²⁸ See the previous chapter on the ideology of the "free". And: Lawrence Lessing, *Free Culture: How Big Media Uses Technology and the Law to Lock Down Culture and Control Creativity*, New York: Penguin, 2004.
- ²⁹ Maurizio Lazzarato, *Videofilosofia. La percezione del tempo nel postfordismo*. Roma: Manifestolibri, 1996, pp. 14 - 15 [translation mine].
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 83.
- ³¹ Nicholas Carr, "Avatars consume as much electricity as Brazilians", *Rough type* (5 Dec. 2006), www.roughtml.com/archives/2006/12/avatars_consume.php