Art, Technics and the New Intermedia

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The history of technology, in its modernist idiom, embraces the spectacle of technological impact (the objects of technological artifice), the new technologies of art-making (photography, film and design), and the historical breaks brought about by changing attitudes to both fabrication and spectacle. When Baudelaire wrote (in his essay "The Mirror of art): "a painting is a machine all of whose systems of construction are intelligible to the practiced eye",he added yet another dimension to this technological scenario: a machine metaphor naming the effect of distance and control.

An archaeology of technology, properly outlined, would cover both the historical shifts in technological instrumentalism and those critical enquiries (intiated by Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Foucault) which problematise (in a manner which often appears as indifferent to the "real world of machines") such priviledged philsophical terms as essence, history and consciousness.

An archaeology or taxonomy of technologies should include (among others) the following definitions.

1 / technologies augmenting human agency (perceived as either craft, industrial or cybernetic techniques)
2 / technologies replacing human agency, in machines, "intelligent" or otherwise.
3 / technology as human created "second nature", *technik* as political practice.
4 / technology perceived as disciplinary power (technology as a mode of knowledge or social apparatus)

This paper analyses the uneasy correspondence between the theoretical and methodological perspectives on image-production (the questioning of the forms of new intermedia, the relationship between art and science etc.) and the socio-historical and economic conditions that prevail in the epoch of neo-

capitalism (characterised by the dispersal of objects and mechanisms of material production).

Formal innovations within a medium are conditioned by immanent procedures, by borrowing from other media, and by the impact of new reproductive technologies. But the presence of new technologies is often discursively or even metaphorically sited rather than taken up as either subject matter or appropriate tool. This strategic response in the work of artists like Gerhard Richter, Sherry Levine and Peter Halley thus allows for the continuation of "old media" investigations of the art - technology relationship.

Finally, I would propose that it is in the trajectory of the individual *oeuvre* (conditioned by development, decay, incompletion, opportunism, interruption and uncertain motivation), as well as the "passages and contaminations of beings and systems" (that the relationship between different media (in the present epoch of so-called "new intermedia") may be better understood.