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Life on Mars? Faciality as a Research Diagram

"The earth," he said, "has a skin, and this skin has diseases. One of these diseases is called 'man'."

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

Towards the end of *Les Mots et les choses* (*The Order of Things*) in the section on the "doublet empirico-transcendental qu'on a appelé l'homme" ("empirico-transcendental doublet called man"), Michel Foucault proposes that any empirical field so long as it concerns "man" can serve as a site in which to found knowledge both conceptually and empirically.¹ For Foucault, at the foundation of all modern empirical and transcendent knowledge stands this figure in his finite being.² Modernity ushers in this form of subject who takes himself as his own object of knowledge. Elaborating an epistemology based on the fundamental anthropomorphism of modern knowledge figured in what he calls "l'analytique de la finitude" ("the analytic of finitude") and its corresponding model of "man" as the limit *informing* what can be known (323/312), Foucault writes that

Au fondement de toutes les positivités empiriques, et de ce qui peut s'indiquer de limitations concrètes à l'existence de l'homme, on découvre une finitude — qui en un sens est la même: elle est marquée par la spatialité du corps, la béance du désir, et le temps du langage; et pourtant elle est radicalement autre.... (326)

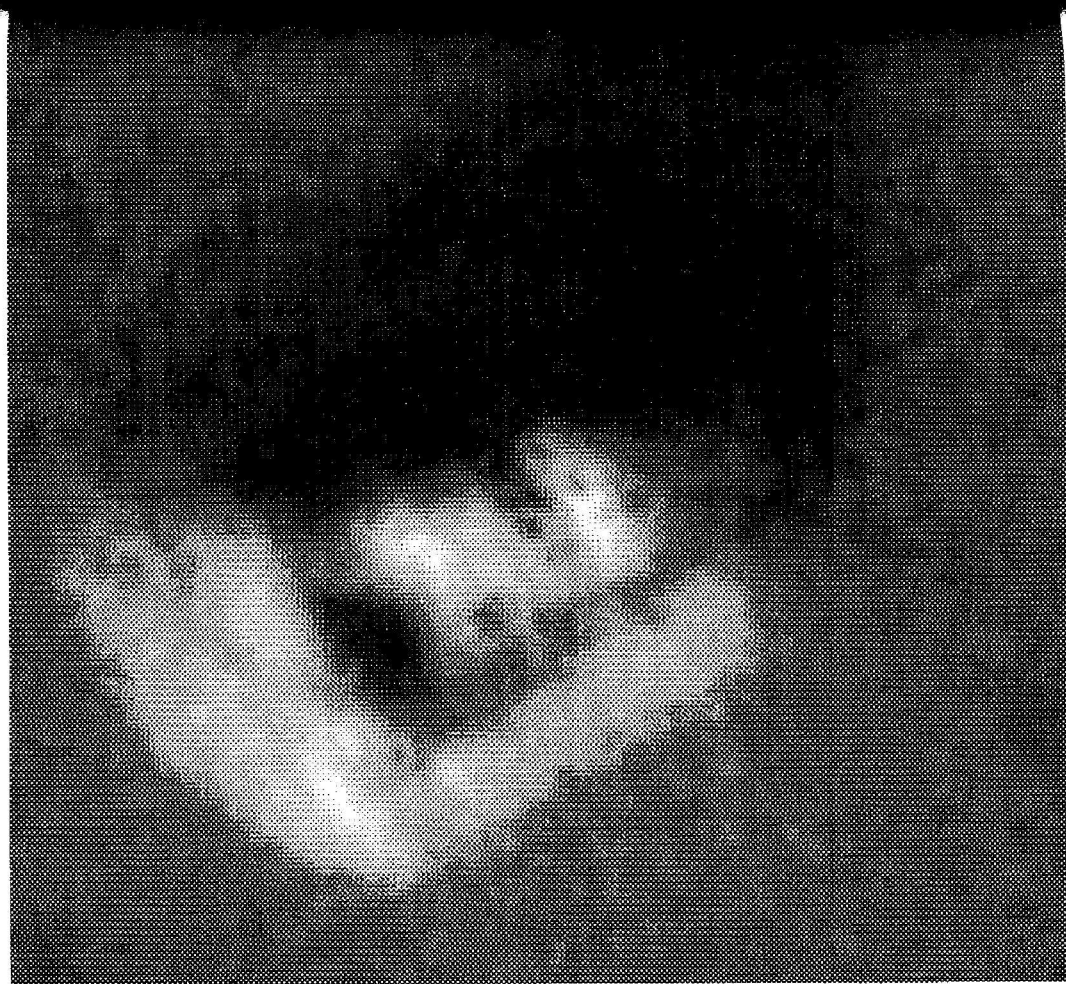
at the foundation of all the empirical positivities, and of everything that can indicate itself as a concrete limitation of man's existence, we discover a finitude — which is in a sense the same: it is marked by the spatiality of the body, the yawning of desire, and the time of language; and yet it is radically other. (315)

- 1 My thanks to John Davidson for locating the original French citations and references.
- 2 In this paper, I keep to this masculine nomination of the subject as a mark of its historical and philosophical specificity.

Foucault goes on to argue that the epistemological category of man is split between finite materiality and the spaces of transcendent representation: man and his double or "unthought." This later element is reconstituted on the basis of man's own finite and empirical basis. Knowledge under these conditions assumes the shape of "une anthropologie ... d'un homme rendu étranger à lui-même" ("an anthropology with ... man rendered alien to himself") (238/226), and discovery consists in the process of a hunting for, and a haunting by, the alien form: "C'est que ce double a beau être proche," writes Foucault, "il est étranger, et le rôle de la pensée, son initiative propre, sera de l'approcher au plus près d'elle-même" ("For though this double may be close, it is alien, and the role, the true understanding, of thought will be to bring it as close to itself as possible") (338/327).

Using Deleuze and Guattari's work on faciality from *Mille plateaux* (*A Thousand Plateaus*), and Deleuze's extension of Foucault's analysis of "man" in his book *Foucault*, in this paper I analyze the recent perception of a humanoid face mapped on the surface of the planet Mars (see figure), taking it as a radical example of the process of alien capture in the service of man. I propose that the Martian planetary body can be seen as a form of exterior space upon which versions of a self, consistent with the epistemological category of "man," may be projected, practiced and performed. Primarily perceived in images sent from NASA's 1976 Viking Expedition, the Face has recently been the object of renewed speculation and interest with a spate of articles and books appearing on the subject (Hoagland, Pozos, Carlotto 1992, McDaniel). The perception of and debate over the Face has arisen alongside NASA's recent renewal of interest in analyzing the planet through its Pathfinder and Global Surveyor missions.

These recent exploratory projects have occasioned speculation on the possibility of finding "life" on the planet. A recent article appearing in *The Sydney Morning Herald* by Tim Radford of *The Guardian* states that the latest space probe, the Mars Rover, that was due to be launched from Cape Canaveral last December as part of NASA's Pathfinder mission, "will begin looking for signs of life — extant or extinct — on an ancient [Martian] floodplain." According to Radford's report, NASA scientists want to determine whether Mars ever held life, a debate that has been inflamed by the reported detection of "signs of life" in two Martian meteorites analyzed by NASA researchers and British scientists last year. Although the report does not specify what constitutes the grounds for identifying alien life, it does spend quite a lot of space detailing the sanitary procedures for safeguarding against the possibility of "cross planetary infection" during the Mars rover's expedition. According to Radford, this latest mission carries the risk of biologically contaminating Mars with human substances. Describing the sterilization processes undergone by the probe, he writes that it lay in a "nitrogen-cooled, vacuum cleaned vault" and was approached "only by people with face masks and latex gloves." Whatever the probe does, argues Radford, it "must not contaminate Mars with bacteria or other foreign matter from Earth." Implicit in



The Face on Mars

these statements and descriptions of procedures is the recognition that man is a form of contagion — an interesting inversion of popular mythologies that usually associate the alien, rather than man, with forms of infection. In the following sections, I argue that the imperative for discovery, the possibility of proposing the question of life on Mars, is governed by a process in which man fabricates and propagates himself through the discovery and analysis of exterior "alien" forms. The perception of a humanoid face on alien territory is part of this anthropomorphic pathology.

CRITICAL CAPTURE

M.J. Carlotto, the author of one of several home pages on the World Wide Web devoted to the Martian Face, describes it in these terms: "The Face on Mars is a rock formation on the surface of Mars resembling an enormous humanoid face staring straight up into space. It is about 2.5 km wide x 0.4 km tall and is located on a flat plain known as Cydonia Mensae in Mars' northern hemisphere." This anthropomorphic Face is not alone. According to the same source, about twenty kilometres south of the Face several other unusual objects which have been dubbed the "City" can be seen. Carlotto writes that this "City" contains "an assortment of pyramidal objects with sharp angular sides," one of which has been named the "Fortress." For some observers, this City has its twin in the pyramid region of Giza here on Earth. So, not only do we find a humanoid form on the alien planet, but also a set of dwellings suggesting that the planet has been, is, or could be, inhabited by human-like beings. Naming the Martian tablelands "Cydonia," after a region in Crete, is also part of this colonizing process.

Much of the debate surrounding the phenomenon of the Face focuses on the possibility that it is a "trick" of light caused by the movement of the planet, or by fallible human perception. My interest in the Face is not related to whether it really exists on the planet's surface, but in its perception, and in its function as an abstraction. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the abstract production of a "face" on a surface is not an innocent moment of representation, but rather announces a particular type of overcoding of a surface. For them "faciality" comprises the abstract colonization of a territory by the most familiar feature of Western anthropomorphism — the human face. Existing as a group of pixels, a rash of dots on the surface of a photograph interpreted as either an accurate or inaccurate representation, the perceptible Face functions as the enunciation of a speculative procedure on the surface of the alien planet. Deleuze and Guattari write that, "Un agencement d'énonciation ne parle pas 'des' choses, mais parle à *même* les états de choses ou les états de contenu" ("An assemblage of enunciation does not speak 'of' things; it speaks on the same level as states of things and states of content") (1980, 110/1987, 87). As a form of affective enunciation, then, the Face on Mars functions like a diagram for the research of space, and the becoming extraterrestrial (alien) of man.

Like the mythical "man in the Moon" who was visible long before the Apollo space missions resulted in a man on the Moon, we can consider the Face on Mars as part of a deterritorializing and reterritorializing process by which man becomes extraterrestrial, and alien — "to boldly go where no man has gone before," as the introductory voice-over from the first *Star Trek* series puts it. This process consists in man casting his face on an alien body. Complying with Foucault's theory that modern forms of knowledge are based on man's recovery of his "unthought," man "finds" an alien image of himself on the Martian planetary body that he will reclaim through the investigation of foreign space. Locating himself in alien form, man seeks to bring the alien closer through a form of epistemological capture involving a telescope of knowledge. Paul Virilio reminds us of the two senses associated with the telescope. He writes that, "Si nous analysons d'ailleurs ce terme de télescope, nous constatons qu'il est composé de deux acceptions: 'examiner le lointain (téléscope) et mélanger sans discernement (télécopier)'" ("The noun 'telescope' examines that which is distant, but the verb 'to telescope,' crushes inward") (1984, 81/1991b, 66). The optical resolution of the Face, getting into the black holes of its eyes and mouth in order to know it better through the imaging technologies of the space probes, mimes a process of epistemological capture and appropriation. As Walter Benjamin argued earlier this century: "De jour en jour s'impose davantage le besoin de posséder de l'objet la plus grande proximité possible, dans l'image et surtout dans sa reproduction" ("Every day, there grows a need to own the object at the closest possible proximity, through its image and even more its reproduction") (qtd. in Virilio 1984, 93/1991b, 74).

Before dealing with the Face on Mars in terms of the epistemological significance of the "becoming alien" of man, I want to account for the diagramming of a face as a rapacious and seductive process based on an ethic of consumption and assimilation. As part of their analysis, Deleuze and Guattari locate the perceptual "hardwiring" of faciality within the primary stages of infantile development occurring through the specular relation of the child to the mother's face but also incorporating the mouth and breast. They argue that faciality comprises a visual precept "impliquant un minimum de distance, et qui va faire apparaître à ce titre le visage maternel sur lequel l'enfant se guide pour prendre le sein" ("implying a minimum of distance and upon which the mother's face appears for the child to use as a guide for the breast") (1980, 208/1987, 169). Explaining this process, they write that it consists of a combination of two very different kinds of elements: "les sensations proprioceptive manuelles, buccales et cutanées; la perception visuelle du visage vu de face sur écran blanc, avec le dessin des yeux comme trous noirs" ("manual, buccal, or cutaneous proprioceptive sensations; and the visual perception of the face seen from the front against the white screen, with the shape of the eyes drawn in for black holes") (208/169-70). This visual-tactile relation assumes critical importance for the act

of eating where the child's mouth is a cavity waiting to be filled, a blind roving and consuming "eye," searching for the inverted black hole on the breast-screen.

As a diagram, faciality becomes abstracted and applied in other sort of relations. Brian Massumi notes that the face "is less a body part than the abstract outline of a libidinally invested grid applied to bodies (it is the 'diagram' of the mother's breast and/or face abstracted from the maternal body ... and set to work by the socius towards patriarchal ends)" (172). In fact, it is possible to draw similarities between Deleuze and Guattari's description of faciality and Martin Heidegger's account of analytic procedure. In "The Age of the World Picture," one of his essays on technology, Heidegger asks the question "in what does the essence of research consist?" He proposes that knowing "establishes itself as a procedure within some realm of what is, in nature or in history" (118). Arguing that procedure does not mean merely method or methodology, he outlines procedure as a cartographic diagram, the projection of a "ground plan":

every procedure already requires an open sphere in which it moves. And it is precisely the *opening up* of such a sphere that is the fundamental event in research. This is accomplished through the projection within some realm of what is — in nature for example — of a fixed ground plan [*Grundriss*] of natural events. The projection sketches out in advance the manner in which the knowing procedure must bind itself and adhere to the sphere opened up. This binding adherence is the rigour of research. (118; emphasis added)

In a footnote to this passage, Heidegger's translator, William Lovitt, draws attention to the translation of "ground plan" from the German term *Grundriss*. He writes that the verb *reissen* means "to tear, to rend, to sketch, to design, and the noun *Riss* means to tear, gap, outline." Thus, Lovitt proposes that the noun *Grundriss* "connotes a fundamental sketching out that is an opening up as well" (118, n.6). Heidegger, then, can be seen as proposing something like the diagram of faciality as the essential aspect of research: a projection sketched out in advance in which "knowing" binds itself in the "sphere opened up." The face, as Deleuze and Guattari argue, is applied to a landscape; it is an abstract white wall with a black hole inviting exploration.

Involving a white screen and a black hole as its minimal functioning unit, the binary machine of faciality is constantly reconfigured on the surface of things, producing a reversible optics of what could be called surface and depth. Deleuze and Guattari describe the formation of the face as "suggestive blancheur, trou capturant, visage" ("a suggestive whiteness and a hole that captures"). They write that

Le visage construit le mur dont le signifiant a besoin pour rebondir, il constitue le mur du signifiant, le cadre ou l'écran. Le visage creuse le trou dont la subjectivation a besoin pour percer, il constitue le trou noir de la subjectivité comme conscience ou passion, la caméra, le troisième œil.

Ou bien faut-il dire les choses autrement? Ce n'est pas exactement le visage qui constitue le mur du signifiant, ni le trou de la subjectivité. Le visage, de moins le visage concret, commencerait à se dessiner vaguement *sur* le mur blanc. Il commencerait à apparaître *dans* le trou noir. (206)

The face constructs the wall that the signifier needs in order to bounce off of; it constitutes the wall of the signifier, the frame or screen. The face digs the hole that subjectification needs in order to break through; it constitutes the black hole of subjectivity as consciousness and passion, the camera, the third eye.

Or should we say things differently. It is not exactly the face that constitutes the wall of the signifier or the hole of subjectivity. The face, at least the concrete face, vaguely begins to take shape *on* the white wall. It vaguely begins to appear *in* the black hole. (168)

From this analysis, the face appears not as a representation but as constitutive in the movement of research from surface to depth, and from depth to surface. Or at least it appears so, because the face spreads or shrinks laterally: it cannot be absolutely determined on either of its singular levels, the black hole or white wall. Like fractals, it cannot be resolved into singular constituent elements as it exists in a state of what Massumi calls "reciprocal presupposition" (35). Looked at in this way, faciality can be determined as a formal diagram for operating relations of subjectification in epistemological investigations of otherness, particularly those of White Western man. Deleuze and Guattari argue that the face is not a universal but is an entirely specific idea, that of "l'homme blanc lui-même, avec ses larges joues blanches et le trou noir des yeux" ("white man himself, with his broad white cheeks and the black holes of his eyes") (1980, 216/1987, 176).

The abstract face operates within concrete assemblages. For Deleuze and Guattari, "il n'y a pas la machine abstraite, ni de machines abstraites qui seraient comme des idées platoniciennes, transcendantes et universelles, éternelles" ("there is no abstract machine, or machines, in the sense of a Platonic idea, transcendent, universal, eternal") (636/509). Instead, abstract machines such as faciality are defined as "les pointes de décodage et de déterritorialisation ... ouvrent-elles l'agencement territorial sur autre chose, sur des agencements d'un autre type, sur le moléculaire, sur le cosmique, et constituent des devenirs" ("the cutting edges of decoding and deterritorialization.... They make the territorial assemblage open out onto something else, assemblages of another type, the molecular, the cosmic; they constitute becomings") (637/510). Applying this insight to the production of the Face on Mars, man leaves (deterritorializes) the Earth by casting his image like a net — or perhaps like a grappling hook — onto alien territory recoding and reterritorializing foreign territory — however, as the perception of the Face on Mars suggests, this process is tied up with the recoding and reterritorialization of foreign space. In this process of colonization and transformation man becomes extraterrestrial.

There are both positive and negative aspects to this "becoming." On the one hand, the process involves the desire for the speculative colonization of space, of other worlds as well as our own as is demonstrated through the off-world perspectives of satellite technology often used in the service of military interests. On the other hand, the extraterrestrial view has influenced our understanding of the Earth as an expendable resource, it has allowed us to "see" the hole in the ozone layer (the product of industrial consumption and excretion), and the smog gradually enveloping the atmosphere around our cities and industrial sites. This latter dystopic view of the Earth's future is found in large quantities of science fiction in which the dying and poisoned Earth is considered uninhabitable and search for another extraterrestrial home begins. As Zoe Sofia has pointed out, these narratives eschew the reality that we have, at present, only one world.

A particularly good example of the extraterrestrial view conscripted for "green" interests can be seen on the wrapping of *EarthCare* toilet paper (a trademark owned by Carter Holt Harvey Tissue Australia Limited). Advertising recycled and unbleached paper, its recyclable cover depicts the Earth as a smiling infantile human face seen from an off-planet perspective, the land masses forming the eyes and mouth, the oceans the cheeks and spaces between. In fact, given the represented position of the Sun behind the earth, one would have to stand on Mars or on the Moon in order to see the Earth from this perspective; the "higher" perspective of a parent looking down on a happy child. This rather patronizing view of the Earth appeals to a rhetoric of accountability — that we become its responsible "parents" — it also suggests that in order to have an alliance with the Earth, we need to reduce its difference to the order of infantile white man,³ producing its surface as a mirror image as we look down on it from an extraterrestrial perspective.

This epistemological ethic of finding oneself in alienated form is applicable to other exteriorities over which man casts his image in order to reappropriate himself from the "outside." The technologies of the book and the computer can be located within the epistemological function of man's doubled exteriority. Employed in the service of man's knowledge of himself, they function as sites through which knowledge of an "interior" self is gained by conscripting an "outside" source. With respect to the functioning of the book, the phenomenological textual criticism of Georges Poulet in his "Criticism and the Experience of Interiority" is a case in point. He exemplifies perfectly the book as a form of exteriority in the service of the empirico-transcendental doublet:

3 Although the *Earthcare* face comprises the blues and greens associated with vegetation and the oceans, the shape of the round "eyes" and the snub "nose" along with a visible white background suggest that the face is white.

take a book, and you will find it offering, opening itself. It is this openness of the book which I find so moving. A book is not shut in by its contours, it is not walled up as in a fortress. It asks nothing better than to exist outside itself, or to let you exist in it. In short, the extraordinary fact in the case of a book is the falling away of the barriers between you and it. You are inside it; it is inside you; there is no longer either outside or inside. (102)

For Poulet, then, the book functions as an opened site through which the subject comes to know itself through the incorporation of an otherness. Poulet describes the experience of reading as "a way of giving way not only to a host of alien words, images, ideas, but also to that alien principle which utters them and shelters them" (105). As a token of man's "unthought," the book is a site, according to Poulet, through which the subject comes to know itself through the folding of self and an exterior other, bringing the unthought closer in Foucault's sense.⁴ "Because of the strange invasion of my person by the thoughts of another," writes Poulet, "I am a self who is granted the experience of thinking thoughts that are foreign to him" (104). As with the book, the computer, too, can be located within this predicative context, contrary to claims that herald it as a rich source of different forms of subjecthood.

ALADDINSCAPE: NEW BODIES FOR OLD?

Like the grain of the Martian photograph, the pixel of the computer screen is organized according to the logic of the facialized speck. In this section, I want to indicate the ways in which contemporary communication technologies, such as the computer, can be considered as subject to similar critical analysis as the Face on Mars. My reason for extending the analysis of the facialized image to the computer screen is to counter some of the over-zealous rhetoric that accompanies recent theorizing about the ways in which contemporary

4 In relation to Foucault's analysis of the "double," Deleuze writes that, "le double n'est jamais une projection de l'intérieur, c'est au contraire une intériorisation du dehors. Ce n'est pas un dédoublement de l'Un, c'est un redoublement de l'Autre. Ce n'est pas une reproduction du Même, c'est une répétition du Différent. Ce n'est pas l'émanation d'un JE, c'est la mise en immanence d'un toujours autre ou d'un Non-moi. Ce n'est jamais l'autre qui est un double, dans le redoublement, c'est moi qui me vis comme le double de l'autre: je ne me rencontre pas à l'extérieur, je trouve l'autre en moi ('il s'agit de montrer comment l'Autre, le Lointain est aussi bien le plus Proche et le Même')." ("the double is never a projection of the interior; on the contrary, it is an interiorization of the outside. It is not a doubling of the One, but a re-doubling of the Other. It is not a reproduction of the Same, but a repetition of the Different. It is not an emanation of an 'I,' but something that places in immanence an always other or a Non-self. It is never the other who is a double in the doubling process, it is a self that lives me as a double of the other: I do not encounter myself on the outside, I find the other in me (it is always concerned with showing how the Other, the Distant, is also the Near, the Same)") (1986, 105/1988, 98).

communication is set to "free" us from the constraints and forms of authority associated with print technology and conservative regimes of representation that uphold the principle of the sovereign subject.

For example, Ilana Snyder in her book *Hypertext* argues that in the age of word-processing we need to reconceive reading and writing as "decentered" activities. Citing G. Landow she argues that:

The tradition of print literacy was thus organized in the service of a dominant author, a god-like figure who was normally male. It is his wishes, as expressed in the literary work, that readers (rendered more or less passive in this tradition) are supposed to respect. Hypertext and contemporary literary theory, however, "reconfigure" the author in a number of important ways. First in both hypertext and literary theory, the functions of reader and writer become deeply intertwined. This hypertext "convergence" of reader and writer infringes upon the power of the writer, "removing some of it and granting it to the reader." ... Hypertext gives to the reader the power that had once been the prerogative of the author. In hypertext, consequently, the reader can become an active, independent and autonomous constructor of meaning. (62)

Like Barthes in his famous polemic "La Mort de l'auteur" where he sought to extinguish authorial sovereignty, Snyder's rhetoric appeals to an ethic of "democratization" as foundation for a radical shift in forms of power and subjectivity. Implicit in her argument is the proposition that a shift in power away from "author"-centered texts towards reader-writer hypertext opens up the possibility for destabilizing the sovereignty of subject centered thought. In support, she cites M. Heim from *Electric Language: A Philosophical Study of Word Processing*:

Fragments, reused material, the trails and intricate pathways of "hypertext," as Ted Nelson terms it, all these advance the disintegration of the centring voice of contemplative thought. The arbitrariness and availability of database searching decreases the felt sense of authorial control of what is written. (65)

For Heim, Snyder, and others, the displacement of the "author" by the reader-writer signifies the disintegration of sovereign consciousness. However, this shift rather than disrupting sovereignty signifies nothing more than a redistribution of its forms. In fact, for Foucault, the sovereignty of "man" is governed by the displaced form of self-knowledge: man finds himself in the shady but translucent spaces and sites of his "unthought." Regardless of the "anti-humanist" rhetoric informing the theorization of electronic writing, I argue that the impetus for knowing and knowledge is still governed by the *image* of man: his face. Foucault's prediction of the "death of man," eloquently described at the conclusion of *Les Mots et les choses* in terms of the erasure of his face from the Earth's surface, is still to come. What I propose, then, is that contemporary forms of

being are determined by forms of images that function as diagrams distributing forms of subjecthood.

In *Esthétique de la disparition* (*The Aesthetics of Disappearance*), Virilio provides an analysis of the phenomenon of the capture of the subject *in* and *by* its specular double. In relation to contemporary modes of communication and representation embodied in computer technology with its PC screens, its web, and (inter)net, he writes:

L'homme ébloui de lui-même fabrique son double, son spectre intelligent et confie la thésaurisation de son savoir à un reflet. Nous sommes là encore dans le domaine de l'illusion cinématique, du mirage de l'information précipitée dans l'écran de l'ordinateur ... et que l'important dans l'électronique-informatique, ce n'est plus la réserve, mais l'affichage. (1980, 52-53)

Man, fascinated with himself, constructs his double, his intelligent spectre, and entrusts the keeping of his knowledge to a reflection. We're still here in the domain of cinematic illusion, of the mirage of information precipitated by the computer screen ... [where] the important thing in electronic information is no longer the storage but the display [unfolding]. (1991a, 46).

Virilio traces a movement from the mirror to the screen, from man's "intelligent spectre" to the computer screen upon which knowledge unfolds according to a logic of captivated reflection. Linking Virilio's observation more explicitly with Foucault's description of the functioning of "man and his doubles," we could say that the screen and the photograph are spaces in which knowledge is configured on an illuminated landscape where the logic of discovery is conducted according the ethic of resolution and magnification, overcoded by the face.

When I turn on my Macintosh Powerbook and peer into the screen, I am immediately greeted by a friendly smiling face appearing centre screen. This miniature icon, representing Macintosh's user-friendly computer design, is a mini-computer. The face comprises black spots for the eyes and a black line for a mouth, the outlines of the imaged computer denoting the outlines of the Mac man's head. This enframing also suggests that my own screen has a face, enhanced by the fleshy texture of the liquid crystal display. The other way of looking at this image is as a space-suited head, perhaps Mac man is a kind of human envoy in alien cyberspace. He has actually managed to get into the body of the other; there he is floating around in the techno-womb that is the computer.

As I look into my computer screen, then, I look into another embedded computer screen, or is it a mirror? My eyes are drawn towards the little black dots of the eyes and the compressed black crack of the mouth. In this face to face relationship, the keyboard should perhaps be more strictly considered as the interface — it is the tactile surface through which I produce changes in the display. However, my relationship with the keyboard is part of an eye-hand

relationship involving the visual caress of the screen, suggesting that its surface is itself an interface. Looking in, it is as though the movement of my vision is invited to penetrate into the receding interior behind the screen drawn towards the horizon of Mac man's eyes, the dot, the pixel. Within this receding enframing, perhaps the pixel has a little face (an eye within an eye). Looking, then, involves a telescoping of the particle, of the spot in space, a movement whereby I am induced to follow the receding face forward into the screen. We can apply this telescopic insight to a specular logic which seeks to render the unknown visible: seen from afar planets look like pixels; close up, pixels could be planets.

Although penetration, getting inside the computer's "headroom,"⁵ may be part of an optical fantasy, we are encouraged to play it out through the rhetorics of computer and virtual reality discourses. This fantasy of penetrating through to the other side of the mirror-screen is echoed in the sub-title of a recently published text on virtual reality, *Virtual Reality: Through the New Looking Glass*. Drawing on the mythology from Lewis Carroll's well-known sequel to *Alice in Wonderland*, *Through the Looking Glass*, for the authors, Ken Pimentel and Kevin Teixeira, virtual reality is defined as the perception of stepping to another realm, beyond the screen and the mirror. In a chapter titled "The Disappearing Computer," under the sub-heading "experimental computing," they write:

Virtual reality is where the computer screen disappears and you become "the ghost in the machine." There's no little screen of symbols you must manipulate or type commands into to get the computer to do something. Instead the computer retreats behind the scenes and becomes invisible, leaving you free to concentrate on tasks, ideas, problems, and communications. (7-8)

This fantasy of going inside and behind the screen and entering another world invokes the trope of alien space, of man becoming other to himself by establishing relations with an "other," an "outside." However, this space can be seen as yet another speculative cell for the incubation of what Deleuze has called a Man-form.

Developing Foucault's analysis of man and his exteriorities, Deleuze proposes that the forms of man are determined by the relationships that he sets up with forces from the outside. He writes that, "Le principe générale de Foucault est: toute forme est un composé de rapports de forces. Des forces étant données, on se demandera donc d'abord avec quelles forces du dehors elles entrent en rapport, ensuite quelle forme en découle" ("Foucault's general principle is that every form is a compound of relations between forces. Given these forces, our first question

is with what forms from the outside they enter into a relation, and then what form is created as a result" (1986, 131/1988, 124). In order to explicate the specificity of "man," Deleuze argues that it is necessary to be able to establish what compound of forces arise in a given historical formation. He argues that the process of establishing a relation with the "outside" involves a corresponding shift in what constitutes the "insides" of man. He proposes that, for the Classical era, man entered into a relationship with the outside based upon the way that he thought of the infinite, resulting in a compound of forces that Deleuze calls a God-form. He writes: for Classical man,

les forces dans l'homme entrent en rapport avec des forces d'élévation à l'infini. Celles-ci sont bien des forces du dehors, puisque l'homme est limité, et ne peut rendre compte lui-même de cette puissance plus parfaite qui le traverse. Aussi le composé des forces dans l'homme, d'une part, et des forces d'élévation à l'infini qu'elles affrontent, d'autre part, n'est-il pas une forme-Homme, mais la forme-Dieu.... Tel est le monde de la représentation infinie. (132-33)

the forces within man enter into a relation with those forces that raise things to infinity. The latter are indeed forces from the outside, since man is limited and cannot himself account for this more perfect power which passes through him. Thus the compound created from the confrontation between forces within man, on the one hand, and the forces that raise to infinity, on the other, is not a Man-form but the God-form.... This is the world of infinite representation. (125)

Arriving in the wake of the God-form, for both Foucault and Deleuze the Man-form appears after the "death of God," once man takes himself as his own limit. Concurring with Foucault, Deleuze specifies modern forces of formation as Labour, Life, and Language, that is, those forces that make possible the development of the human sciences (biology, political economy and linguistics). Their analyzes having reached and accounted for contemporary modes of being, both Foucault and Deleuze finish their arguments by invoking the death of man and the possibility of a new form of compound. As noted above, Foucault concludes *Les Mots et les choses* with the image of the erasure of man's face from the surface of the Earth and predicts the end of this life-form. Deleuze echoes Foucault's concerns in his conclusion to his book on Foucault by asking the following questions: "si les forces dans l'homme ne composent une forme qu'en entrant en rapport avec des forces du dehors, avec quelles nouvelles forces risquent-elles d'entrer en rapport maintenant, et quelle nouvelle forme peut-il en sortir qui ne soit plus Dieu ni l'Homme?" ("if the forces within man compose a form only by entering into a relation with forms from the outside, with what new forms do they now risk entering into a relation, and what new form will emerge that is neither God nor Man?" (1986, 139/1988, 130). As a response to these concerns, I propose that with forms of contemporary being and selfhood man has become part alien, a man-alien compound that nonetheless remains anchored in

5 The interior "space" of the computer could also be characterized as a "stomach" given that the access to the external disc drive can be seen as a kind of mouth or anus that eats and/or excretes floppy discs.

a reflective principle of speculation that tends to foreclose the recognition of alterity.

We can see the production of man's alien genealogy taking shape in the mythologies developed in science fiction film and television — abduction narratives are a particularly good source for this in film and television texts such as the *X-Files* which speculate on the possibility (and paranoia) that alien life forms already walk the Earth and have genetically tampered with human flesh. The search for alien life is also evident in the electronic technologies that appear to hold out the promise of liberation from "old" sovereign forms of subjecthood — Mac man is indeed the colonizer of new space, but what are his chances of recognizing "other" life given man's self-absorption with his own image? Rather than holding out the promise of self-transformation (man becoming *other*), mythologies associated with "the alien" are all too often associated with a replacement for a lost sovereign and male "God." Narratives of scientific and pseudo-scientific speculation about the origin of man have involved a rewriting of religious mythology that has taken two divergent paths: either man is a product of natural evolution, a cousin of the "animal" primates, or else he is, in a more speculative fashion, from elsewhere, as the perception of the Face on Mars suggests.

It is interesting to speculate on why the man-ape evolutionary relation has been superseded by the alien-man relation in popular mythology. One possible answer is that the man-alien relation is complicit with heliocentric models of power that have parallels with older vertically hierarchic cosmological models such as "the great chain of being" extending from God inhabiting the heavens to the lowest forms of life on Earth — in this vertical lineage, man inhabited a position beneath angels who were thought to be able to mediate between the Earthly and heavenly realms. Extraterrestrialism can be seen as a way of aligning ourselves with a higher power of a different order to our Earthly and fleshy being, and as a way of escaping (through speculation) our Earth bound materiality.

Exemplifying this point, Michelle Petranovic, in the popular magazine *Exposure: The Magazine of Future Developments*, writes that by "substitut[ing] every 'god' in the bible with 'alien' ... you will begin to get a clearer picture of history" (54). Petranovic is clearly influenced by the work of Erich Von Daniken. In the late 1960s and 1970s, Von Daniken's book *Chariots of the Gods? Unsolved Mysteries of the Past*, and the film of the same title, were responsible for popularizing speculations about man's alien origins. Sounding very much like a narrative from the *X-Files*, and through recourse to ancient texts such as the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the Bible, archaeological sites, and "scientific" discourse, Von Daniken proposes this hypothesis:

Dim as yet undefinable ages ago an unknown space-ship discovered our planet. The crew of the spaceship soon found out that the Earth had all the prerequisites for intelligent life

to develop. Obviously the "man" of those times was no *homo sapiens*, but something rather different. The space men fertilized some female members of this species.... Thousands of years later the space travellers returned and found scattered specimens of the genus *homo sapiens*. They repeated their breeding experiment several times until finally they produced a creature intelligent enough to have the rules of society imparted to it. (69-70)

In this rewriting of human history, man becomes a child of the alien, quite literally an alien-man compound — women, on the other hand are aligned with the Earth and its life forms. Von Daniken's aliens impregnate women implying that they, like he, are "men." The figure of woman, once again, quite predictably functions as a receptacle, the *hystera* of man's visions and the screen upon which his intelligent spectres take shape.

If, as Foucault and Deleuze propose, forms of human existence are determined by relations that we forge with our "outsides," then this is the challenge of our futurity: how are we to dismantle the image of the face that supplies us with a territorializing machine that can overcode even the most foreign territory? Looking *up* and *out* towards new and other spaces is perhaps just to perpetuate an escape route for the production and reflection of the same old face. If, as Donna Haraway argues, "biology has been pre-eminently a science of visible form, the dissection of visible shape, and the acceptance and construction of visible order" (21), then our future may depend on our skill in the construction of images rather than mirrors.

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Literature, Language, and the Nonhuman

"In literature the human reveals itself through language."

"Or rather, in literature, language creates the human."

"Literature is the intersection of language and the human."

"The human, which has its possibility in language, extracts from the possibilities of language to create literature."

"Literature extracts the human from language to give the human its own voice."

"The subtraction of literature from language, leaves us with all that is non-human."

"Language, literature, and the human fight pitched battles of mutual capture, shifting alliances and attrition, punctuated by periods of peace or uneasy truce."

Nowhere does the human seem more the cornerstone of literature than in the novel. If the novel is an escape, it is an escape *into*: meaning, sense, the human. Madame Bovary. Isabel Archer. Gatsby. Ahab. Hester Prynne. It is the great *characters* of the novel that we remember, and the emotions that spring from the human encounter with all that is outside of it. Greed, obsession, sin, regret, and pride assign a value to the humanity of fictional characters. Their triumphs are the human triumphs of understanding, reconciliation, creation; their defeats are equally human: despair, loneliness, loss.

In these terms the relationship between the human and literature is almost one of identity. The literary is that which shows forth the humanness of the human; it is the human activity *par excellence*. And the human is but the creation of a system of meanings and values that must in large part be called literary. The human takes shape among an endless proliferation of stories, characters, mythologies. There is no story without the human, no human without stories: one reality with two modalities.

But how much more complicated the picture becomes when the human-literary becomes the triad of language-literature-human.

Language shatters the easy equivalence of literary and human by opening up a dimension of the non-literary in literature (that is, everything that lies outside of the scope of the literary but on which the literary depends) and of the non-human in the human (that is, all that lies outside of the scope of the human, but nonetheless makes it up).