

# Creative resistance with progressive repetition

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# Preface

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‘The ... word ‘revolution’ implies a movement of return, a spectral rehearsal of what has gone before that, so the revolutionary believes, can be made to live again. Yet the repetition is never quite the perfect restaging of the past that its instigators envisaged.’ (Dillon 2003)

How is repetition perceived, desired, feared, utilized and manipulated in and by society? Is a sense of repetition utterly unavoidable when one considers the necessity of everyday tasks required for even basic survival? Is a desire for change, either, a desire for progression or a desire for a return to a previous state (evolution/revolution), or simultaneously both? Also when an apparent change (in society or the individual) occurs, is this change then desired to stabilize through an act or process of repetition?

In light of these questions I would like to construct a preliminary notion about the role or position *repetition* and *progression* has in society and the individual. This will form a foundation definition that I will assess throughout this paper. I would like to suggest an interpretation that sees; *repetition as consistency*, and, *difference as progression*.

I will discuss, in the form of a metaphor regarding technological progression, that a desire/necessity for consistency (in society and the individual), is only an illusion of consistency (repetition). This, as theorist Gilles Deleuze argues, is because of the inherent difference within each repetition;

‘...for Deleuze, repetition always illustrates not only a difference from but also a transgression of the original, because nothing can be equal or equivalent to what is singular. Because of its transgressive nature repetition ‘belongs to humour and irony’.’ (Dauber 2003. p101)

The nature of repetition *is* its inherent differences that reveal; repetition can only exist as a repetition of difference. As I will later demonstrate, an understanding of repetition as an exact copy of an action or condition is a misinterpretation of the reality of repetition. And any form of structuring which relies on this understanding of repetition for survival will fail because of the impossibility of an exact repetition of that action or condition.

Also in relation to *progression* and *repetition* I will examine, the constant development of new technologies as an implementation of ideas which constitute, at the same pace, an increasing desire for control. I will argue to look at technology, and the way it is utilized, manipulated, desired, and resisted by society is a way of describing the power and consequences of *progression* and *repetition*.

### **Perspective and structuring**

Here I need to establish a few necessary perspectives about the position from which I create a discourse. When I discuss society, I comment from the perspective of the society I live in; a perspective of a developed, western, capitalist society. Technology is discussed through modern innovations and developments; the impact present and future technology has on society.

I utilize [and later discuss] some of the main concepts of *Difference and repetition* by Gilles Deleuze, and relate them to a concept of *creative resistance* exploited by

individuals within society to constitute an evolutionary change. This, as I will examine, is a concept of resistance which does not form a stance of *revolutionary opposition* or movement. This paper is structured into 4 main chapters, discussing *resistance* in relation to social change, technology and everyday life. But all fall under a strategy of repetition; the relation, use and purpose it has to the individual and society.

Because of the nature of the subject/s in discussion, i.e. repetition, difference and progression, I aim to formulate the chapters of this paper into a non linear narrative. Therefore the chapters, although inevitably presented in a linear form, can be read apart from each other, and I would suggest should be interpreted separately. However they are still integrally related to each other. This approach is intended to allow for the deliberation of similar issues regarding *repetition* and *progression*, from multiple angles. This is a concept similar to that of Deleuze and Guattari's *Rhizome*<sup>1</sup>, a concept which they applied to in the creation of *A Thousand Plateaus*.

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<sup>1</sup> 'To understand Deleuze and Guattari's model of the rhizome, it is important to first comprehend what the rhizome is a response to. Deleuze and Guattari argue that all Western (traditionally humanist) thought is based on arborescence, which is the model of the tree. The tree sprouts from a single seed, producing a trunk and continuously branching out, growing and spreading vertically; yet the tree can be traced back to a single origin. ... Similarly, most modes of thought attempt to posit an origin, or totalizing structure, which we know leads to thinking in terms of binary oppositions, and the privileging of one binary over the other.

In order to break from traditional arborescent thought, and the resulting binaries, Deleuze and Guattari proclaim, "The multiple must be made". The ultimate symbol of the multiple, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is the rhizome. ...As a rhizome has no center, it spreads continuously without beginning or end and basically exists in a constant state of play.' (O'Kelly Date)

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## Resistance and Information Technology

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‘When the farthest corner of the globe has been conquered technologically and can be exploited economically;...when you can simultaneously ‘experience’ an assassination attempt against a king in France and a symphony concert in Tokyo; when time is nothing but speed, instantaneity and simultaneity [;] ...there still looms like a spectre over all this uproar the question: What for? - Where to? - And what then?’ (Heidegger 2000. p40)

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The art of war, politics, physics, economics, psychoanalysis and theology are modes of discourse by which the term *resistance* is increasingly implemented within modern society. As Dolorès Djidzek-Lyotard notes in an essay on the subject of resistance<sup>2</sup>, in each case the word suggests a power relationship struggle over issues of control, which is ‘consistently associated with strategy’ (Lamarche 2004 p12). Information technologies are increasingly being used as tools of control and influence to gain power over these modes of discourse. Concurrent to this, society also increasingly slips into a simulation of its own reality created by technology and used by the media to masquerade reality. I will examine the possibility that resistance to a lack of control or awareness of reality becomes harder to implement as a result of the mediated repetitive use of technology.

So does the issue of control become fundamental in discussing the influence of information technologies? How much do we have over developing information technologies? How do these new technologies fit into and influence our lives? And is a fear of technology, born out of a lack of control, a motive for *resistance* against information technologies?

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<sup>2</sup> See: ‘De La Résistance’ [Rue Descartes]

An attempt to tackle these questions will first need to establish where and who uses information technologies for political gain.

An essential characteristic of capitalist society is its use of new technologies to create an illusion of a standardisation<sup>3</sup> of knowledge within individuals and society as a whole. By implementing fragmented information as propaganda through the media<sup>4</sup>, corporations could be seen as attempting to create an illusion of stability, or in contrast terror, and assert control over an ever more automated society.

‘New technologies can be used to “informate” rather than to automate, placing human discretion back at the center of economic activity. However, the reality is that corporations resolutely resist this approach and attempt to use new technologies to centralize authority even further.’ (Meiksins 1996.)

Capitalist information technologies operate to fulfil fantasies, a mediator of the unconscious human desiring machine<sup>5</sup>. Computers, television, cinema, hyperspace, virtual reality systems etc construct utopian states, fulfil fantasies and form a simulated state of the ‘other’. These conditions of the ‘other’ are a manifestation of a desired escape to a state of total satisfaction, which, as a consequence, leads to individual and collective dependence on the organizations that created them. I agree with Vaneigem when he says;

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<sup>3</sup> Standardisation: to make or become standard

<sup>4</sup> The use of media through advertising, newspapers, television news etc for exploitation and metaphysical control over society has been greatly publicised by, amongst others, Noam Chomsky. *See: (he has written at length on the subject in various publications) Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda. (2002) Seven Stories Press.*

<sup>5</sup> Ward (1997) explains the true self as being a schizophrenic desiring machine; ‘the unconscious is constantly ‘rewritten’ by society and history, endlessly remade through direct contact with the outside world and that the true self is schizophrenic, a ‘desiring machine’ and that this desire is the dynamic force behind all social and personal actions and interactions, desire constantly flows into multiple, random connections with people and objects.’

‘Controlled mediations separate the individual from himself, his desires, his dreams, and his will to live; and so people come to behave in the legend that you can’t do without them, or the power that governs them.’ (Vaneigem 2003. p85)

Raoul Vaneigem writes from a position on the Marxist political left in his book, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*. He suggests modes of resistance to the controlling forces of power in capitalist society, including his suggestion of the mediated use of technology for political gain. He comments on a capitalist society that attempts to establish control through the standardisation and implementation of technology. As a result, he ascertains, a resistance is generated within society, which utilizes a revolutionary attitude against the creation of a *perfect power structure*.

‘By laying the basis for a perfect power structure, the cyberneticians will only stimulate the perfection of its refusal. Their programming of new techniques will be shattered by the same techniques turned to its own use by another kind of organisation. A revolutionary organisation.’ (Vaneigem 2003. p85)

Yet our desire for this ‘other’ persists despite concerns over control and the inevitability of the eternal return<sup>6</sup> to a reality which lacks total fulfilment and necessitates constant desire.

‘We reach beyond ourselves to try to grasp this other, and come back with something but never the otherness that we desired. ... Total satisfaction, like total knowledge, is unavailable. ... [This] desire constantly returns and returns in pursuit of its impossible object.’ (Cohen + Taylor 1998. p4)

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<sup>6</sup> Deleuze refers to Nietzsche’s concept of the *eternal return* of every event which affirms the idea of reality as a continual state of becoming.

If one uses technology as a mediator in the desire for the 'other', the technology used often returns with a *simulation* of reality. To view technology as creating a *simulation* of reality that can be returned to whenever one desires, is to view these *simulations* as our desire for repetition. For these simulations can conform to anything by way of re-creating an *illusion* of 'our' reality. And it is this simulation of 'our' reality which I refer to in understanding technology's masquerading of reality. Information technologies always illustrate a partial representation, it can never, by definition, be complete or comprehensive. If we look to an example from the media for its use of technology to influence and create a simulation of *collective opinion*, what manifests is a simulation of complete information, a creation of a *hyper reality*.<sup>7</sup> I would like to reference Sean Cubitt<sup>8</sup> when he refers to Baudrillard's example of the opinion poll to support the idea of the media masquerading reality;

'The public scarcely exists as an entity: we can't see it gathered together, it doesn't go down to the pub or off to the soccer match. Yet it has an opinion, scientifically measured. But, argues Baudrillard, on the one hand opinion is simply an artefact of the questions which are asked, and on the other, its publication gives to the ideal, imaginary concept of the public, a reality it would not otherwise possess.' (Cubitt 2001. p46)

So if, as in this case of a 'scientifically measured' opinion poll, technology is used by the media to create a distortion of reality, it could be accused of acting ideologically. An accusation that shows the possibility that an influencing power could create a simulated

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<sup>7</sup> *The hyper real*: '...in this post-modern world, signs (pictures, phrases, images, sounds) have become detached from their referents, have lost contact with the material and social world and appear in the media as 'pure signifiers'...They present themselves as real, as virtual reality.' (Cohen + Taylor 1998. p9)

<sup>8</sup> in, *Simulation and social theory*[see bibliography]

collective reality. However Baudrillard argues in defence of the media standing accused of corrupting reality;

‘Ideology only corresponds to a corruption of reality through signs; simulation corresponds to a short- circuit of reality and to its duplication through signs.’  
(Baudrillard 1994. p27)

Technology has the ability to realize individual’s ideas, thoughts and fantasies, yet because of its mediated use to gain control and create simulated realities, one can be forgiven for an attitude of resistance. An attitude which is apparently against the development of those controlling information technologies that create an illusion about the reality of simulation and a masquerading of its potential.

‘...the potential that simulation and technology have to free us is being used by those who see it as a way to succeed in the various markets of the economy, politics and culture. In particular, we are now being offered the greatest of all products and sales pitches -- the illusion of an unfallen self, an unfallen society and unfallen nature.’ (Sanes 1997)

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## Automated society; Difference and repetition

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‘After three thousand years of explosion, by means of fragmenting and mechanical technologies, the western world is imploding...abolishing both space and time...Rapidly, we approach the final phase of the extensions of man -the technological simulation of consciousness, when the creative process of knowing will be collectively and corporately extended to the whole of human society.’  
(Cohen + Taylor 1998. p20)

This suggestion of a collective process of knowing is in part due to the advent of new automata technologies in the last few decades. The purpose of and resulting effects of inventions such as, cyborgs, androids, robots, clones etc, within society becomes widespread, because of the domains with which these technologies operate. Genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, telematics and science fiction are just a few examples of automata technologies which society addresses on a daily basis. What these technologies ultimately aim to achieve is to affectively replicate actions of the human body, to perform tasks more efficiently and more ‘reliably’ than a human being. Automata also create tasks or act as a problem-solving device, performing beyond the capabilities of the human body and mind.

As the amount of applications and domains with which these technologies are implemented increases, so do fears about the value of human life itself.<sup>9</sup> Actions once solely practiced by humans are now being replaced by automata. This suggestion of a progression towards a posthuman entity/society inevitably engenders fear, disturbance and resistance within society, toward the technologies that highlight the limitations of humanity. However, these technologies which are an attempt to physically replicate and

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<sup>9</sup> If automata technology continues to replace all the repetitive, ‘mechanical’ tasks performed by humans then the human workforce potentially becomes redundant and obsolete.

replace human actions, actually contribute more to the undermining of uniqueness and difference, than to the replacement of an 'imperfect' species. This enforces an idea, employed by the artist Natalie Jeremijenko, that the public passively consumes data without active interpretation.

Let's examine, as a case in point, the genetic cloning of living organisms. When 'Dolly the Sheep'<sup>10</sup> became the world's first 'cloned' animal, public imagination about the possibility of human cloning escalated into moral and ethical issues about individualism and authenticity. This has led to many countries, most notably George Bush's America, imposing a complete ban on human cloning and restrictions on genetic research.

I do not wish to discuss here the ethical issues surrounding human cloning; rather I would like to consider the possibility, or indeed the impossibility of an exact clone; an actual repetition of the same.

In order to achieve this I will utilize the project '*OneTrees*' (1998) carried out by the artist Natalie Jeremijenko. In '*One Trees*', Jeremijenko worked in collaboration with scientists at the University of California, to produce thousands of trees cloned from a walnut tree called the Paradox, through a process of micro-propagation. This process is asexual reproduction, using a plant cutting [undifferentiated tissue], which 'promotes sameness and standardizing' (Dauber 2003. p100) when producing large numbers of 'clones'. The genetically identical seedlings were presented at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, where they were allowed to grow before being planted in various locations around San Francisco. These 'clones', an apparent repetition of the same, expose some misconceptions about the nature of cloning, as they not only manifest sameness (identical DNA), but also difference, because of their physical appearance.

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<sup>10</sup> See :[www.sciencemuseum.org](http://www.sciencemuseum.org), for information on the cloning of '*Dolly The sheep*'

‘...even as young seedlings, the clones displayed unique physical properties: distinctive branching patterns, varied numbers of leaves and diverse growth rates.’ (Dauber 2003. p100)

The purpose of the ‘OneTrees’ project is not a question of highlighting the variations in external or environmental factors, which result in differences displayed by the seedlings, more it serves to question the notion that genes are ‘The Book of Life’. They act to dispel a myth, created by society after the advent of genetic engineering and more recently the complete mapping of the ‘human genome’<sup>11</sup>. A myth that suggests the complexity of human life and the uniqueness of an individual can be confined to their genetic make up. Jeremijenko points out that the difference in each tree proves that this is indeed not the case.

‘Firstly, by displaying clones that have been raised in identical environmental conditions, the project confounds most people’s expectation that the exact same genetic material and exactly the same environmental conditions will result in [cloned] trees that look the same. The differences between the clones demonstrate empirically and unequivocally that genes do not encode nor determine life, contrary to mainstream media coverage.’ (Jeremijenko 2003)

What this example seeks to implement is a resistance to, what Jeremijenko so adequately puts as, ‘the passive consumption of authoritative data’. This is where closed systems of information technology and distribution (e.g. media networks, internet, government etc) construct institutionalized knowledge through the delivery of fragmentary facts. These

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<sup>11</sup> For detailed information about the Human Genome see: <http://www.sanger.ac.uk>

systems deliver information in selective forms which can often be presented, consumed and misinterpreted as fact by a collective public.

This is what I mean by the notion of an *automated society* and also the purpose of the opening quote to this chapter. As individuals, the information we receive is becoming more like an attempt to create collective knowledge in society, where fragmented information is interpreted as institutionalised knowledge. Cohen and Taylor's suggestion regarding the construction of collective knowledge, through the use of information technologies, leads us into a great sense of fear about our freedom of independent thought, indeed our own identity. However, as Jeremijenko's representational strategies point out, it is the passive nature in the consumption of information which hinders independent awareness. One must seek active interpretation of information and a deconstruction of institutionalized knowledge created by fragmentary facts.

If individuals within society have fears about an 'automated' society, metaphorically being cloned to act the same resulting in a loss of identity, it is in reality only an illusion. An illusion however which many, including Jeremijenko, believe needs to be exposed and resisted.

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Fear and desire of repetition  
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‘...the nature of repetition [;] ... there is nothing so predictable, so tiresomely unwelcome, as the ideal copy: it is a marker of a merely traditional, conventional desire for consistency, a loyalty to a past that, repetition assures us, has never really gone away.’ (Dillon 2003)

I wish to examine here the philosophical background, theories and critical discourse on the nature of *repetition* itself. By focusing on the work and ideas of *Difference and repetition*, by Gilles Deleuze, and in relation to other theories and critical commentary on repetition, I aim to question the existence of *actual* repetition, but also, simultaneously, demonstrate the necessity of repetition for survival.

If repetition is only thought of in terms of an exact recreation of an action or condition than the very nature of actual repetition is misplaced. Only to be replaced by an illusion of repetition, that satisfies a desired experience or perception of repetition.

‘For Deleuze, the condition for what we commonly understand as repetition in habit and memory is, in fact, the continuity afforded by the variation of an intensity in an idea or sensation.’ (Williams 2003. p12)

So an illusion implies a suggestion that actual repetition can not exist. This as Deleuze explains is because of difference<sup>12</sup>. The fundamental difference of time reveals that each repetition exists in a different space and period of historical reference. Further more as Deleuze and (later) Kierkegaard told us, repetition paradoxically always returns with a difference:

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<sup>12</sup> The difference in repetition I refer to does not form, in what Deleuze terms as, *difference in itself*; a notion of difference which is not thought of in terms of identity and representation.

‘...for Deleuze, repetition always illustrates not only a difference from but also a transgression of the original, because nothing can be equal or equivalent to what is singular. Because of its transgressive nature repetition ‘belongs to humour and irony’.’ (Dauber 2003. p101)

‘...for that which is repeated has been- otherwise it could not be repeated- but the very fact that it has been makes the repetition into something new.’ (Kierkegaard 1983. p149)

Nevertheless, with the realisation about the absence of actual repetition, an illusion or sensation of repetition does still exist and is still desired by the individual and society. A contradiction in terms, granted, but this contradiction is necessary in understanding the use of repetition by the individual and society.

One of the main reasons why a desire for repetition manifests is because of the inherent differences contained within a consciously desired repetition. As Deleuze explains; with a desire for repetition comes a desire for difference. We desire repetition because each repetition is different. But this apparent *unconscious* desire for difference can manifest into a *conscious* desire for difference; a desire for change, an escape from repetition.

*The nightmare of repetition*<sup>13</sup>, as Cohen and Taylor declare, manifests in a desire for novelty (difference), an escape from the mundane tasks of everyday life. One eventually becomes bored or immune to the effects of repetition, and so a fear of repetition triggers a desire for novelty (difference).

If a desire for novelty is established, is this desire only temporary? Or can it manifest into a pursuit of constant novelty, distinct from repetition. One observation sees;

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<sup>13</sup> See: *Escape attempts: the theory and practice of resistance to everyday life* (see bibliography)

‘The promise of novelty through escalation lies all around us...Repetition must be avoided, novelty embraced. Only if we experience life as progress, as ever-changing, can we be sure that we are on the path to personal satisfaction. But again the promise of novelty is confounded by our sense of déjà vu, by the feeling that no matter how much we change settings and roles and properties, that still we become assailed by certain recurrent features of the scene which belie our attempts to maintain its novel status.’ (Cohen + Taylor 1998. p22)

If accurate this would suggest that a pursuit of constant change in everyday life is just as unattainable as a pursuit or desire for actual, ‘perfect’, repetition. So this brings me to discuss a problem about the desire for a ‘perfect’ repetition; the desire for, a consistently reliable, occurrence of repetition which is perfect because of its lack of difference.

Contemporary music recording and playback technologies are dedicated to developing and creating a ‘perfect’ version of a score. The CD has become the digital perfection of a modern recording. Even today we are seeing the works of the past (once only available on an unreliable vinyl surface that could easily be damaged) being ‘digitally re-mastered’ to a state of ‘perfection’. The flawless CD then removes our sense of participation in the event of performance and instead ‘seduces with its seamless perfection’. (Cubitt 2001. p48)

‘It is a pure product made to a model of perfection, in which reality itself has been transformed into a perfect simulation of itself, and we will never be satisfied with a less than perfect rendition in the future.’ (Cubitt 2001. p48)

These examples on the conscious application of repetition represent an illusion about the nature, use and necessity of repetition. An attempt to permanently escape the *nightmare*

*of repetition* can never succeed because a sense of repetition is required for survival. The daily habits of even the most basic functions require repetition if human life contains any value at all. Conceivably the only way to escape repetition is to challenge its actual existence, by refusing a pursuit of its perfect realisation.

‘Perhaps we only believe in repetition [as something interesting, engaging, even moving] by claiming that it’s not really repetition at all. Which is in turn a way of claiming that our lives -all our habits, routines, obsessions, mistakes unrecognized and patterns unbroken - are really, despite all evidence to the contrary, not repetitive. And so we watch, listen, read and live, all the time intoning the same mantra. There is repetition. There is no repetition. Repeat to fade...’  
(Dillon 2003)

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The progression of resistance

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‘Social change is effected less by marching the streets waving banners, shouting slogans, and more by the transformations of everyday life effected with and through information systems.’ (Jeremijenko 2003)

If one examines the extent of media coverage on the increasing amount of social disturbance in recent years. One can see the resulting formation of counter resistance to the threats of war, terrorism and globalisation (to name but a few areas of conflicting judgment). This increased social disturbance, in the form of opposing activists, public demonstrations and increased discourse on the subject of social change, oppose judgements through an act of *resistance*. In light of these acts of *resistance* can we ascertain that resistance has to form an oppositional force, a kind of ‘taking sides’ approach? Or, is it possible to form a concept of resistance which does not constitute a return to the idea of being *against*?

In order to think about this notion of what I will describe as *resisting with*, it is necessary to think about the act of revolution for social change. One can then decide how to propose an idea of resistance that constitutes an evolutionary change, the idea of resistance that could be distinct from ‘partisan quarrels or political activism’ (Lamarche, 2003. p.14). Although as Lamarche explains ‘[i]n this context, there is a high risk of finding oneself with a metaphor whose effect is reduced to nothing’ (p.14).

Many artists now employ this rhetoric of *resisting with* as a form of *creative resistance*.

I would like to use an example of work by the Montreal artist Michel de Broin to demonstrate what creative resistance is and how it can be implemented within society.

Firstly though Lamarche describes De Broin's use of resistance;

'In Michel de Broin's work, the metaphor of resistance is approached from the perspective of how it makes possible a modernizing of political and social questions without, however, invoking the political and social in their most manifest sense.' (Lamarche 2003. p.14)

In his work '*The opacity of the body in the transparency of circuits*' (1997), two glasses were placed next to each other. One glass contained red wine and the other contained a light bulb, both of which were submerged in mineral oil. An electrical circuit was connected to power the bulb. The circuit passes through the wine, resulting in a weakened current. '[I]n this work, the wine, symbolizing the body, plunged into the viscous bath, corrupted the conducting circuit and hampered its efficiency.' (Lamarche 2003. p.16)

What De Broin's work seeks to implement or, more accurately, suggest is an attitude of resistance which is distinct from a conventional attitude of *revolution*.

It is a suggestion about the act of resistance rather than an *ideal* that could be dictated to others. This is because the form of resistance that De Broin concerns with does not try to actively destroy its enemy. More it is an idea of resistance that, as Françoise Proust sees, alters the enemy's game plan;

‘Resistance is born of one force’s thwarted affections for an-other...It does not confront the enemy in order to inflict defeat upon it, but struggles with adversity, for which the adversary is only a stand-in, in order to weaken it and make it give in... Resistance forces the enemy to shift ground and alter its game plan.’ (Proust 1997. p.13)

An extension of this idea of *creative resistance* is a notion described by some as *distant participation*.<sup>14</sup> This is an idea utilized by many artists that is distinct from the idea of creating an avant garde, (yet again). As Wetterwald describes this position; it is not a case of becoming an opposing force;

‘Rather, it’s a matter of being light and mobile, of becoming attuned, of constantly adapting, shifting and re-situating yourself. [And not]...accepting the dialectic of opposition...of entering into conflicts or engaging in polemics...’ (Wetterwald 2003. p.86)

Distant participation then could be seen as a way of interacting with society and subtly suggesting/invoking change on it, rather than having an attitude of outright rejection. The code of the revolutionary, whose goal by definition is one of complete change, is then dropped in favour of an act of creative resistance. An act of which contains the possibility of evolutionary social change.

For an act of *creative resistance* to suggest the possibility of social change it almost inevitably has to implement the development of information technologies. Manipulation, exploitation and an awareness of the possibilities contained in technology means that creativity can take its energy from the same system it aims to destabilise.

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<sup>14</sup> Wetterwald (2003) discusses the work of artists utilizing a strategy of distant participation. (p88)

‘New technologies provide an opportunity for social change. While they do not cause social change, they are a site at which the shifts and uncertainties can be exploited, a strategic site in which the resources of the establishment and the status quo cannot ensure success.’ (Jeremijenko 2003)

As with *creative resistance*, the implementation of *distant participation* as a strategy is one which contains a heightened awareness about the nature of social change. A decision to create opposition and outright rejection is one which prolongs conflict and hinders evolutionary change.

Achour comments on living in/with capitalist society;

‘The world I live in, capitalist society, both pleases and dis-pleases me; I don’t reject anything outright. This is neither an attitude of complete belonging nor one of head-on rejection. I like advertising and video clips, I like different forms of commercial entertainment, such as video games and dance music, even as I am aware of the manipulation involved and the purely mercantile aspect of some of these things. Neither resistance nor complacent acceptance.’ (Achour 2002. *See Wetterwald 2003*)

# Conclusion, again....

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Resistance to totality and a progression  
through repetition

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‘If we abandon sameness in favour of difference, we also abandon eternity in favour of history, and with it we will have to sacrifice any belief in that ascent to wholeness.’ (Cubitt, s. 2001. p3)

What is created by a desire for actual repetition, or consistency, in our daily lives is a pretence to totality, that in some way or at some point we will reach a sort of final knowledge about ourselves, a point when change [or difference] itself is resisted. The source of this pretence to totality lies in a misunderstanding of the nature of communication. Communication and the technologies it uses, serve not to depict the real but to communicate, to create discourse, to highlight differences. ‘Communication is not about the relationship with the real but about relationships with other people (Cubitt 2001. p152).’ When communication and its technologies are used to converse information, they can be misinterpreted as a presentation of fact. Take the example I used in the chapter *Resistance and information technology*; the use of the media by governments, advertising companies, religion and individuals etc to portray their information as real or factual. If a conflict arises, as a result of a misunderstanding or misuse of communication [as stated above], polemic oppositions form in a direct and seemingly unyielding resistance to each other.

This leads me on to the use of resistance in society and the potential a form of creative resistance has on it. The entire difficulty of the concept of resistance resides in its association with revolution. But as Jeremijenko and De Broin demonstrate it is the spirit of possible change that *creative resistance* subtracts from the idea of revolution and not its desire for head-on collision.

‘Revolution, associated as it is with violence and failure in history, no longer holds the attraction it once did for artists in many countries,...For artistic revolt is informed by a concern for the future and finds its essence in the psychic life, in desire- the innermost engine of all revolution, great or small.’ (Pontbriand 2003. p6-9)

So having examined the use of repetition, resistance and technology by the individual and society I can now refer back to my preliminary notion that stated seeing; *repetition as consistency* and *difference as progression*.

As I demonstrated in chapter 1-c, a twofold illusion regarding repetition exists. A fear about actual repetition is illusory because of difference and a desire for actual repetition is flawed because of the impossibility of its realisation. However if one views *repetition as consistency* as the necessity for survival then one can simultaneously also acquire *difference as progression*.

Progression through the use of repetition then deals with the constant need or desire for adaptation and questioning. Knowledge can never be fixed in some kind of time warp endlessly repeating a utopian dream. It always contains potential for change, to adjust to the reality of the moment. One, then, should always question the reliance on the desire for repetition, for stability, the pretence for totality. Indeed the constant progression of thought and knowledge born out of communication is a belief in the future, a resistance to final totality; a belief in the possibility, in fact, the inevitability of change.

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