

Subjectless Subjectivities

Présentes à soi dans la dimension vertical, se survolant sans prendre de distance, ce ne sont ni des objets capable d'expliquer la perception, ni des subjects capables de saisir un objet perçu, mais des intériorités absolues qui se saisissent elles-mêmes et tout ce qui les remplit, dans un processus de "self-enjoyment." [Self-present in the vertical dimension, overseeing themselves without taking any distance, these are neither objects that can explain perception, nor subjects capable of grasping a perceived object; rather, they are absolute interiorities that take hold of themselves and everything that fills them, in a process of "self-enjoyment."]

Gilles Deleuze

Le seul moyen d'échapper aux absurdités et aux méfaits des idéalismes contemporains nous paraît être ainsi de conférer un statut machinique à la subjectivité et d'accepter sans réticence l'existence d'une passion néguentropique à tous les étages du cosmos (et, cela, dès le point zéro de l'expansion de l'univers et jusqu'à l'épanouissement des machinismes les plus déterritorialisés, tels que ceux de la poésie, de la musique, des sciences (pour en rester, faute de mieux, aux activités terriens)...

[It appears to us that the only way of avoiding the absurdities of contemporary idealisms is by conferring a machinic status to subjectivity and accepting without reticence the existence of a proto-subjectivity, an economy of choice, a negentropic passion, at all levels of the cosmos — from the point zero of expansion of the universe to the blossoming of the most deterritorialized machinisms, such as those of poetry, music, and the sciences.]

Félix Guattari

Reconnaître la dimension d'un thématisme trans-spatial jointe indissolublement aux dimensions spatio-temporelles, ce n'est pas admettre le vieux dualisme de l'âme et du corps.... L'organisme n'est pas une machine *plus* une âme. L'existant organique ne subsiste que dynamiquement dans un flux incessant qui, en peu de mois, renouvelle toutes ses molécules. Il est activité constante, permanence de dynamisme, et non permanence d'une réalité matérielle, informée après coup par une forme idéale.

[The recognition of trans-spatial thematic indissolubly connected to spatio-temporal dimensions, does not mean accepting the old dualism of body and soul.... The organism is not a machine *plus* a soul. Organic existence only exists dynamically in an incessant flux that, to put it simply, renews all its molecules.

It is constant activity, a permanence of dynamism, and not the permanence of a material reality, informed afterwards by an ideal form.]

Raymond Ruyer

Even the mind of God can only imagine
Those things that have become themselves.

D.H. Lawrence

INTRODUCTION

This essay intervenes in the growing field of Deleuze and Guattari studies and seeks to give expression to their ethico-aesthetic conception of subjectivity, its political nature and distinction from classical, objectivist, scientific theories. What is disturbing about their endeavour is that it attempts to think that which cannot be thought and to write the unreadable. To think of a not-external outside and a not-internal inside: "un dehors plus lointain que tout monde extérieur, parce qu'il est un dedans plus profond que tout monde intérieur: c'est l'immanence" ("an outside more distant than any external world, because it is an inside deeper than any internal world: it is immanence") (Deleuze and Guattari 1991, 59/1994, 59). A self-referential, autopoietic immanence that is not immanence to something (as to a purely ideal transcendent ego-onto-theological plane or Subject/Eye) but rather an autopoietic or self-producing/positing immanence of subjectivity. A plane of immanence or consistency "which has no supplementary dimension to that which transpires upon it." "A what!?"

Such a project which poses "absolute interiorities" and "proto-subjectivities" sits uneasily within the contemporary humanities as over the last fifty years or so, with the notable exception of feminist theories that rethink subjectivity, a massive commitment has been made to deny, deconstruct or obliterate any concept of the "subject" and "interiority." The traditional notion of the rational, conscious, Cartesian or phenomenological subject has been the intended target of poststructuralism and postmodernism in their differing guises and the current intellectual landscape seems to be imbued with the idea that any notion of subjectivity (which must surely be bringing a "subject" or "mind" in through the back door) is highly suspect and to be treated with derision or at the very least, suspicion. We are encouraged by some to believe that we inhabit a world of pure exteriority (whatever that is) and manipulable "body parts" available for reconfiguration. (The fascination with cyborgs.) Or even a world where "subjectivity" has been taken outside of the skin onto the internet (Stelarc) — on the apparent assumption that it had been originally like a gas "inside" something called the "body" which now becomes a purely material support. Dualism in and out through the bloody back door.

This prevailing suspicion of the concept of subjectivity remains operative despite the later works of Michel Foucault which develop the notion of "le souci

de soi" ("the care of the self") and the whole corpus of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's work which has as its recurring theme *the autopoietic or self-referential production of subjectivity*. That is to say, the processes of the realization of autonomy understood as in-itself and for-itself, and not as from its aspect in the essence of another such occasion" (Whitehead 89). Without being able to fully develop this concept right now, it should be immediately understood that such a definition of autonomy or autopoiesis distinguishes itself from any purely thermodynamic definition that is solely constituted by relational flows. An autopoietic event has an endo-consistency that is lacking in a vortex or dissipative structure defined only by its relational flows with the surrounding medium. A baby or a molecule or a paramedium is not in and of itself a whirlpool or vortex or a wave or a crystal although it involves dissipative structures and can display vortex-like "behaviour." It is a sovereign individual autonomy with an intrinsic existential reality or self-referential territory, *even though it has relations with other existential territories*. It is a value that is an end in itself — for its own sake. Very few philosophers or scientists (with the exception of Spinoza, Whitehead, Ruyer, Maturana, and Deleuze and Guattari) have attempted to think the possibility of an existential integrity that is at the same time in relation with other self-referential territories or events. To think the possibility of creative affirmation and Joy in a world of suffering and resentment. It is easy to be against things but not so easy to be for something and know how to produce it.

There are significant differences between these three theorists (Deleuze and Guattari and Foucault) but their fascination with the creative generation of subjectivity seems to have been ignored in over emphasizing the deterministic construction of subjectivity and the subject by the symbolic order and power relations. In this respect it is striking that in his final work *Chaosmosis* (Chaosmosis) — a metatext whose time has yet to come and which develops to an extreme degree material which is barely introduced here — Guattari gives an account of Daniel N. Stern's *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*, which offers a brilliant portrayal of the non-conscious sense of self already available at birth. The fusional, transitive "emergent self" that ignores the oppositions self-other, subject-object.¹

It is of course fair to say that a significant aim of Deleuze and Guattari's work (and Foucault's) has been to pulverize the traditional notion of the subject

1 Massumi refers to Stern's work in his fine essay "The Autonomy of Affect": "One's sense of 'aliveness' is a continuous nonconscious *self-perception* (*unconscious self-reflection*). It is the perception of this self-perception, its naming and making conscious, that allows affect to be effectively analyzed — as long as a vocabulary can be found for that which is imperceptible but whose escape from perception cannot but be perceived, as long as one is alive" (97; emphasis in the original). The opening onto the virtual.

as the ultimate essence of individuation, pre-reflexively contemplating its own existence, and to develop a *schizoanalytic* subjectivity superposing multiple strata of subjectivation in a multicomponential cartography opposed to the Conscious-Unconscious dualism of the Freudian schema. This is not a denial of the process of individuation but the recognition that subjectivity deploys itself as much "beyond" the "individual" ("travaillée par des agencements collectifs d'énunciation" ["wrought by collective assemblages of enunciation"]); Guattari 1992, 21/1995, 8) as "before" it on the side of preverbal intensities. Pathic or prehensive events. This recognition of a multiplicity of subjective strata has often been interpreted as the primacy of something called *multiplicity* and the consequent denial of subjectivity or unicity, understood in a phenomenological or Cartesian sense, whereas the absolute *self-referentiality* of this ensemble of subjective strata and conditions is necessary for its emergence as a "Territoire existentiel sui-référentiel, en adjacence ou en rapport de délimitation avec une altérité elle-même subjective" ("existential Territory, adjacent, or in a delimiting relation, to an alterity that is itself subjective") (Guattari 1992, 21/1995, 9). The difficulty here is in recognizing that the multiplicity of heterogeneous components can emerge as a process of subjective self-reference through a kind of global transconsistency or existential grasping (Guattari 1992, 157/1995, 113; 1989a, 82; following Whitehead's process of concrescence) whereby a fragmentary whole emerges, a *unitas multiplex*, a unity in multiplicity, an absolute survey that involves no supplementary dimension (Ruyer). A plane of consistency. Rational modes of discursive knowledge cannot adequately grasp this kind of metaphorical approach which can only be fully appreciated through a non-discursive, affective pathic awareness. The *grasping* of real unity of feeling. You either get it or you don't. A particle of zen. A whole in all the parts. A holon. An endo-consistency in which the components are distinct but inseparable. A composite unity. A Whiteheadian event. A philosophy of organism. A body without organs.

I get the feeling that Deleuze's substantive, *multiplicity*, has been sometimes understood as a numeric multiplicity (the dialectical opposition of the one to the multiple) involving space and spatial divisibility, *partes extra partes*, as one of its conditions. But this is exactly what Deleuze (developing Bergson) and, as we shall see even more coherently, Raymond Ruyer (who posits a "real extension" *partes in unitate*) seek to avoid, by positing a qualitative multiplicity involving duration as one of its conditions. A qualitative multiplicity is not an aggregate of parts with an apparent unity constituted by the relation of separate numerical or physical existents (the Galilean world of purely external relations) but an event, an *actual occasion of experience* (Whitehead). A processual pathic intensity. An eventivity breaking down the ontological iron curtain between mind and matter. A desiring machine. A "fusional" multiplicity. A zone of intensive continuity that is not spatially divisible. A quantal nonlocality. A plateau. A real space. "Rei's only reality is the realm of ongoing serial creation," Rez said.

"Entirely process"; infinitely more than the combined sum of her various selves" (Gibson 202).²

What cannot be too strongly emphasized is that although for Deleuze and Guattari the individuated psyche is generated from a pre-individual autopoietic or self-referential node of events and intensive singularities, *these events are themselves subjectivities in absolute or non-dimensional self-survey*. The term "absolute survey," which Deleuze and Guattari take from the French philosopher Raymond Ruyer, is introduced here as a kind of conceptual provocation. Its meaning and affect can only be apprehended through some engagement with Ruyer's "biological philosophy" and its incorporation within the complex conceptual onto-ecology developed by Deleuze and Guattari, most notably in *Le Pli: Leibniz et le Baroque* (*The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*) and *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie* (*What Is Philosophy?*).³ There could be no subjectivity (a self-referential territory in-itself and for-itself) within a world composed of a numerical multiplicity of infinitely divisible physical existents related solely through cause and effect (the very notion of extension or substance evaporates with infinite divisibility — extension reduces to pure points, something that idealist philosophy was quick to notice in positing an a-spatial "subject" or spirit to hold it all together). The early Greeks (not to mention non-Western thought, which I won't) had no concept of a separate "body" and "soul." Their cosmos was an "animated" living whole without separation between "matter" and "mind."⁴ Pansychism. Brian Massumi claims that "one of the things that

2 In other places in *Idoru*, Gibson disconcertingly uses the term "aggregates of subjective desire" to characterize his "desiring machines." A process is not an aggregate. It is an event or intensive multiplicity.

3 In fact references to Ruyer occur through Deleuze and Guattari's work (e.g., *Différence et répétition*, *L'Anti-Œdipe*, *Mille Plateaux*, *Le Bergsonisme*). In *L'Anti-Œdipe*, the very distinction between micropsychic/molecular desiring machines (*where functioning and formation are still confounded* — which is the very nature of subjectivity for Ruyer; note this early version of *autopoiesis*) and the molar regimes, whether social, technical, or organic, is explicitly drawn from Ruyer (Deleuze and Guattari 1972, 336-41/1983, 283-87). Deleuze saw Ruyer as the latest of Leibniz's great disciples and felt that Ruyer's biological philosophy offered a profound analysis of the notions of the virtual and actualization. In *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, the very definition of a concept and cerebral activity are quite explicitly drawn from Ruyer's work and we are specifically referred by Deleuze and Guattari to chapters 7-11 of *Néo-finalisme* for an account of absolute overview and absolute surfaces or volumes as true beings. None of Ruyer's extensive *oeuvre* has been translated into English and all quotations have been translated by me.

4 Some theorists of contemporary quantum brain dynamics have now accepted this "fundamentality" (see Hameroff and Penrose). Aristotle appears to have invented the modern concept of "matter" and the history of ideas has no single concept of matter. Paradoxically, twentieth-century microphysics has largely dissolved any relevance this term may have had. The elementary domains of microphysics are quantum monads. It is important to look at the neo-Platonism in Deleuze and Guattari and its relation with Platonism. Especially on the

distinguishes Deleuze's philosophy most sharply from that of his contemporaries is the notion that ideality is a dimension of matter (also understood as encompassing the human, the artificial, and the invented)" (97).

Métaphysique, méta-sémiotique, peu importe le nom qu'on lui donne, mais je ne vois aucune raison de refuser l'existence de l'équivalent d'une subjectivité, ou d'une proto-subjectivité, aux agencements vivants et matériels. Cette économie moléculaire des choix n'est pas assimilable à une micro-physique d'entités élémentaires passives. Freud a gâché son intuition géniale concernant l'existence d'une subjectivité inconsciente, en cherchant à la fonder sur des analogies thermodynamiques, de façon à opposer radicalement une sphère de l'ordre de la différenciation et une sphère de matière première énergétique indifférenciée. (Guattari 1979, 161)

Metaphysical, meta-semiotic, regardless of the name, I see no reason to refuse the existence of the equivalent of a subjectivity or proto-subjectivity, to material and living assemblages. This molecular economy of choice cannot be assimilated to a micro-physics of passive elementary entities. Freud wasted his brilliant intuition concerning the existence of an unconscious subjectivity by trying to base it on thermodynamic analogies in a way that radically opposed a sphere of differentiated order to a sphere of undifferentiated primary energetic matter.⁵

One of the challenges of this essay (which is only the introduction to a larger project) will be to articulate such a notion of subjectivity and its radical distinction from phenomenological accounts which distinguish an inert desubjectified "in-itself" and a self-conscious "for-itself" that creates the world by naming it (Heidegger). This phenomenological subjectivity is characterized by a particular (bizarre) understanding of visual perception and does not envisage the possibility of a subjectivity (Deleuze and Guattari emphasize the distinction between subjectivity and Cartesian consciousness — "il ne suffit pas de penser pour être" ("it's not enough to think in order to be")) (Guattari 1989b, 23) that does not operate in the mode of phenomenology's understanding of visual perception but is rather a direct non-discursive auto-possession — a non-human for-itself (to be distinguished from an unconscious). A "fourth person singular." An in-itself that is for-itself. Auto-affection. A self-feeling unicity. A real space. Not a Cartesian or Bergsonian geometrical space.

For Deleuze and Guattari human subjectivity or interiority (before/beyond any internal Cartesian spectator/cinema complex or geometrical notions of spatiality)

concept of "immediate" or intuitive knowledge, see Alliez 1996. Alliez, a former student of Deleuze, has written the only study of Deleuze and Guattari that engages with the influence of Whitehead and Ruyer on their work (1993).

5 Here and elsewhere, the translation of the texts for which no published English translation exists is mine.

emerges as a self-referential existential Territory at the intersection of multiple components (material, semiotic, biological.... Castañeda's tonal-nagual: "a fiber stretches from a human to an animal, from a human or an animal to molecules, from molecules to particles, and so on to the imperceptible — a universe of microperceptions" [1988, 249]) which are themselves proto-subjectivities or intensive singularities. Singularities are pre-individual, non-personal, a-conceptual events or "sensitive points." The unity of mind and nature (Deleuze). The Body Without Organs/The Plane of Immanence. Absolute survey. Castañeda's sorceric account of perception and its Deleuzo-Guattarian appropriation, is, as will be become blindingly obvious, a practical philosophy that is profoundly Leibnizian-Spinozist. We are self-referential, autopoietic "bubbles of perception" — whose "assemblage point" can be radically shifted in order to free us from the fight or flight mentality (q.v. Castañeda). *This is in no way an idealistic subjectivism or solipsistic antirealism.*

In *Les Trois écologies*, Guattari emphasizes that such an approach is difficult to maintain in contexts where there is suspicion or even a rejection in principle of any specific reference to subjectivity (1989b, 24-27). He argues (I am glossing on the French text) that even those who do deal with subjectivity take great care to never stray too far from pseudo-scientific paradigms, borrowed in preference from the hard sciences: thermodynamics, systems theory, linguistics, topology (Lacan), etc. As if a scientific super-ego required that psychical entities had to be reified and only understood in terms of extrinsic coordinates and physical forces. This is not to say that Deleuze and Guattari do not appropriate notions drawn from the so-called hard sciences but that this is done (as Guattari has emphasized, 1980) in terms of operational borrowings rather than in terms of a scientific super-ego.

Guattari further argues that in such conditions it is hardly surprising that the human and social sciences ignore the intrinsically creative and auto-positioning or autopoietic dimensions of processes of subjectivation (1989b, 25). He also suggests that the best cartographies of the psyche, or if one prefers, the best psychoanalyses, were written by Goethe, Proust, Joyce, Artaud and Beckett, rather than by Freud, Jung and Lacan. And that in the work of the latter, it is the literary part of their work that remains the most valuable. For example, Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* can be read as an extraordinary modern novel. By emphasizing the creative possibilities inherent to subjectivity, Guattari is arguing that all those who intervene in subjective or psychical domains, whether individual or collective (in education, health, culture, sport, art, the media, the fashion industry...) have an ethical responsibility which cannot be dissolved by a neutrality based on a claim to mastery of the unconscious or scientific knowledge. That is to say we have a politico-ethical responsibility for our creations or progeny whether virtual or actual.⁶ For the way we invent/posit subjectivities and for our reappropriation of the means of production of subject-

6 In *Chaosmose* Guattari cites Hans Jonas on the ethical obligation we have with respect to our "progeny."

tivity, which alone will enable us to deal with the eco-systemic crises already engulfing us and with those yet to emerge ("les épreuves ... de spasme chaotique, qui se profile à l'horizon" ["the chaotic spasms looming on the horizon"]) [Guattari 1992, 187/1995, 135]. Guattari distinguishes this aesthetic paradigm and ethico-political responsibility from classical scientific approaches which objectify or reify subjectivity in extrinsic coordinates and claim to act from a position of disinterestedness. An immanent proto-ethics that does not emanate from a transcendent plane. Freedom exists only within immanence (Spinoza). Guattari stresses that we should look to artistic and poetic practices for inspiration in the creative processes that are intrinsic to any reinvention of subjectivity or mentality. A reinvention that will involve the three ecologies of the environment, the *socius* and the psyche.

As Alain Badiou has argued, "Deleuze is searching for a figure of interiority (or of the subject) that is *neither* reflection (or the cogito), *nor* the relation-to, the focus (or intentionality), *nor* the pure empty point (or eclipse). Neither Descartes, nor Husserl, nor Lacan" (61). This essay will suggest/ seduce that Raymond Ruyer's post-Leibnizian psycho-biology provides Deleuze and Guattari with their most compelling account of subjectivity (a spatio-temporal immanence of unity in multiplicity, or of interiority in exteriority) which achieves its expression in their final work *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* (particularly in the conclusion, "Du chaos au cerveau" ["From Chaos to the Brain"] where the brain becomes subject in absolute-survey, an auto-possession or "self-enjoyment," prior to the emergence of the phenomenal perceptual field — "the brain is the *mind* itself"). In *Différence et répétition* (*Difference and Repetition*), and through his engagement with Bergsonian thought (things are luminous by themselves without anything illuminating them: all consciousness is something, not of something), Deleuze had sought to displace the notion of consciousness as illuminating objects or casting light on things (a theory of thought without image) and Ruyer provides the conceptual apparatus for this displacement as it is taken up in *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*

What is this brain becoming mind subject in absolute survey? This absolute surface in self-possession? This immanent plane of consistency, or of Nature, that has no supplementary dimension to that which transpires "upon" it... this immanent survey of a field without any need of an ideal "subject" giving it its unity.

MEMORIES OF A PLAN(E) MAKER

C'est une "forme vraie", primaire, comme la définissait Ruyer: non pas une Gestalt ni une forme perçue, mais une *forme en soi* qui ne renvoie à aucun point de vue extérieur, pas plus que la rétine ou l'aire striée du cortex ne renvoie à une autre, une forme constante absolue qui se survole indépendamment de toute dimension supplémentaire, qui ne fait donc appel à aucune transcendance, qui n'a qu'un seul côté quel que soit le nombre de ses dimensions, qui reste co-présente à toute ses déterminations sans proximité ou

éloignement, les parcourt à vitesse infinie, sans vitesse-limité, et qui fait autant de *variations inséparables* auxquelles elle confère une équipotentialité sans confusion. (Deleuze and Guattari 1991, 198)

It is a primary, "true form" as Ruyer defined it: neither a Gestalt nor a perceived form, but a *form in itself* that does not refer to any exterior point of view, any more than the retina or striated area of the cortex refers to another retina or cortical area; it is an absolute consistent form that *surveys itself* independently of any supplementary dimension, which does not appeal therefore to any transcendence, which has only a single side whatever the number of its dimensions, which remains copresent to all its determinations without proximity or distance, traverses them at infinite speed, without limit-speed, and which makes of them so many *inseparable variations* on which it confers an equi-potentiality without confusion. (1994, 210)

This stunning expression will require unpacking! What are "true forms" and how might they relate to "equipotentiality"? In fact this essay may do no more nor less than attempt to explicate this Ruyerian concept of the mind/brain virtual-actual interface as appropriated by Deleuze and Guattari, and in so doing distinguish this approach to subjectivity from that of mechanistic, gestalt, Bergsonian⁷ or phenomenological accounts. Deleuze and Guattari consider this to be Ruyer's singular achievement as manifested throughout his extensive oeuvre.⁸ (What new ways of thinking and feeling can be experienced today?)

ABSOLUTE SURVEY AND THE MYTH OF INTENTIONALITY⁹

This is how the translators of *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* introduce the concept of "survey":

It is difficult to find a single English equivalent for the word *survol*. The word derives from *survoler*, "to fly over" or "to skim one's eyes rapidly over something." However, the

7 Ruyer distinguishes his theory of perception from that of Bergson. In fact, he says Bergson "is at the antipodes of the truth" (1988, n35). Ruyer insists that "images" or sensations are "in" our heads *not out there at the point of emanation, even if we form a whole with the image à la Bergson*. Ruyer's approach has many similarities with contemporary developments in quantum brain dynamics. The world in its apparent "out-there-ness" is a brain achievement that involves no projection. Nor is it a re-presentation. "Being in the World" is a brain achievement. Or perhaps the achievement of any autopoietic, self-forming, primary true form, with or without a nervous system (e.g., a subjectivity composed of quarks or galaxies).

8 Ruyer (1902-87) spent his whole teaching career at the University of Nancy. A conference was organized in his honour by the university of Nancy in 1993, the proceedings of which are now available in print, *Raymond Ruyer, de la science à la théologie*. It contains an essay by Serge Valdinoci entitled "Vers l'autre demarche. Ruyer, Merleau-Ponty, Deleuze."

9 There are only two texts in English that deal with Ruyer's work (Wiklund, Tomlin). Only two short essays by Ruyer have been translated into English (1980, 1988).

present use derives from the philosopher Raymond Ruyer. Ruyer uses the notion of an absolute or nondimensional "survol" to describe the relationship of the "I-unity" to the subjective sensation of the visual field. This sensation, he says, tempts us to imagine the "I" as a kind of invisible center outside, and situated in a supplementary dimension perpendicular to, the whole of the visual field that it surveys from a distance. However, this is an error. The immediate survey of the unity of the visual field made up of many different details takes place within the dimension of the visual sensation itself; it is a kind of "self-enjoyment" that does not involve any supplementary dimension. (ix)

Ruyer claims that although the concept of a Consciousness-entity has been universally rejected — and that this rejection is nothing new, finding its roots in Empiricism — it is often only rejected in words, being based on an illusion that has never been clearly eradicated (1950, 52). We have the strong impression that our sensorial/visual field is *in front* of us and that we *look at it* from a supplementary dimension. This is an error. Sensations are brain achievements and there is no brain behind the brain or eye behind the eye to look at its products. Vision or any other sensorial experience is existence rather than "representation of." There is no re-presentation of one world but only the multiple worlds our brains achieve. *This is not subjectivism — no philosophical or psychological subject is involved.* The brain or organism as an autopoietic, self-referential, primary true form, is naturally producing a virtual world (or actualizing a virtual world that is real but not actual; the indiscernable oscillation at infinite speed between the virtual/actual; chaosmosis). "But really you do *not* see the eye. And nothing in the visual field allows you to infer that it is seen by an eye" (Wittgenstein s.5.633; Wittgenstein is very close to Ruyer in stressing that "we" do not *observe* our consciousness; nor do we look out through our eyes! just in case we hadn't noticed).

Ruyer maintains that absolute overview or survey is the key, not only to the question of subjectivity and consciousness, but to the problem of life itself (1952, 100). In order to clarify this concept and introduce his central thesis of *reversed epiphenomenalism* Ruyer, in a crucial chapter of *Néo-finalisme* — "Surfaces absolues et domaines absolus de survol" (chapter 9) — makes a distinction between the optical and the mental aspects of vision. Reversed epiphenomenalism claims that there would be no "matter" or real extension if there were no autopoietic "primary true forms" or subjectivities as indivisible unities (with an outside beyond any externality and an inside beyond any internal world). Pure Cartesian, geometrical extension has no real substance. (Deleuze follows Ruyer in arguing that the great dividing line is not between the organic/inorganic but between the individual or primary true form and the aggregate; 1988, 139/1993, 104). The molar/molecular distinction. An elephant is molecular. Crowd phenomena are molar.

The illustration or beginner's guide to absolute domains of survey (which involves the example of visual perception, but only in order to go beyond it and

demonstrate that there are absolute surfaces that do not involve vision or a contemplating subject or idealistic ego) unfolds something like this:

If we are looking at a physical surface such as a checkered table-top — the checkers of which are all definable *partes extra partes* (i.e., exterior to each other, *they are all at different places on the surface*) — we must be positioned in space so that our retina is at some distance, and in a dimension perpendicular to the surface of the table. This is also the case for a camera. A living being, localized as a body, has to be in a second dimension to see or photograph a line and in a third dimension to see or photograph a surface. In brief, as Ruyer puts it, an observer must always be in $n+1$ dimension in order to be able to see, at once, all the constituent points of a being in n dimensions. However, Ruyer claims (and this is important so do not forget it) that *this geometrical law, which is valid for perception as a physico-physiological event, is not valid for visual sensation as a state of consciousness* (1952, 96). However, if we shift our attention to our visual sensation *per se* then we do not have to be outside of our sensation, in a dimension perpendicular to it, in order to contemplate all the different details of which it is made up. We do not have to imagine a "third eye" or super-retina in its turn perceiving our visual sensation. Thus the viewed table as a visual sensation does not obey the laws of physical geometry. "C'est une surface saisie dans tous ses détails, sans troisième dimension. C'est une 'surface absolue,' qui n'est relative à aucun point de vue extérieur à elle-même, qui se connaît elle-même sans s'observer" ("It is a surface seized in all its details, without a third dimension. It is an 'absolute surface,' that is not relative to any point of view exterior to itself, which knows itself without observing itself") (1952, 98). Ruyer claims that visual sensation *has only one side*, somewhat like a mobius surface although the analogy should remain one. (Topological forms do not have an intensive, pathic, autopoietic dynamism. Neither will *purely algorithmic* infinitely unfolding fractals do the job — although self-referential fractal dimensions are pretty cool. Mandelbrot has argued that autopoietic molecular systems are not infinitely fractal. There is infinite fractality only in purely mathematical geometrical constructions). This oneness of visual sensation is due to the non-geometrical and non-dimensional character of survey. *If the sensible surface could be seen from both sides it would no longer be a sensation but an object.* The overviewing I/eye is metaphorical. Rather than being punctiform as suggested by the geometric optics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the "I" (self-feeling multiplicity/unicity) is domainal and ubiquitous, copresent to sensation and having neither proximity nor distance from sensation. A decentred subjectivity with an always displaced periphery. The self-awareness of our visual sensation is spatially and temporally ubiquitous. It is everywhere at once, being simultaneously in the multiple details of our field of vision. Whereas, in the physical surface the checkers are spatially separate and distinct, in the absolute surface there exists no such separateness: the various

orders and relations of the checkers are immediately given in an absolute unity, without therefore being a fusion or confusion. For Ruyer, this means that one's sensation is a "true form," and not a *pattern*, or a structure, or an aggregate of elements, or a Gestalt-form. What surprises Ruyer is that this revolutionary consequence of the negation of the subject for the nature of sensible extension was not recognized before. The possibility of an extensity that is in-itself and for-itself without being perceived by a spiritual subject.

In the *La Logique du sens (Logic of Sense)*, Deleuze conceives of the brain in terms of the conversion of a cerebral surface into a metaphysical surface, "le cerveau, non pas seulement comme organe corporel, mais comme inducteur d'une autre surface invisible, incorporelle, métaphysique ou tous les événements s'inscrivent et symbolisent" ("the brain is not only a corporeal organ but also the inductor of another invisible, incorporeal, and metaphysical surface on which all events are inscribed and symbolized") (1969, 259/1990, 223). A topological surface. (Topological proximity is independent of distance or contiguity; Deleuze and Parnet 104). In *Cinéma 2 (Cinema 2)*, Deleuze, drawing on the work of Gilbert Simondon, indicates that "the cortex cannot be adequately represented in a Euclidean way" and that there is now the discovery/invention of a topological cerebral space which "achieves the copresence of an inside deeper than any internal medium, and an outside more distant than any external medium" (see chapter 8, "Cinema, Body and Brain, Thought," 1989, 211). "The image no longer has space and movement as its primary characteristics but topology and time." (Topology is the study of those properties of geometric forms that remain invariant under certain transformations, such as bending, stretching, folding). "To belong to interiority does not mean to 'be inside,' but to be on the 'in-side' of the limit" (Simondon, qtd. in Deleuze 1969, 126/1990, 104). The difficulty of finding non-dimensional or hyper-dimensional or transversal language. The problem with topology is that it remains a geometrical analysis of a non-geometrical non-dimension. The supreme act of philosophy is to think the unthinkable. As Spinoza did once and, as it also seems, did Ruyer.

But I (as a non-punctiform, primary true form) digress. And is philosophy not in a state of perpetual digression (Deleuze and Guattari 1991, 28/1994, 23)? Let us return to the absolute surface and sort a few things out, like *infinite speed and equipotentiality*.

Because the "I" or self-enjoyment of sensation (n.b., not the "I" of common sense or semiotic/psychoanalytic criticism) is in all "places" at once, it is not constrained by the special theory of relativity which informs us that one cannot be in two places at once. There is no limit-speed for the domain of subjectivity. It does not respect Einstein's cosmological limit of the speed of light (quantum physics has now empirically verified nonlocal quantum entanglement that involves absolute simultaneity at a distance). Self-enjoyment is everywhere in the visual field. The checkered squares of the table-top vary in distance from each

other but in visual sensation this isn't a real distance. Ruyer claims that the notion of absolute overview enables us to understand the difference between subjectivity (or primary "subjectless" consciousness) and the secondary consciousness of a "subject."

Ruyer will accept the neurobiologist's account that our visual sensations (in fact all our sensations) are occurring in the brain as observed from outside. However, "within" the brain there is no third eye that would scan the visual sensations as given in their immediacy. It surveys itself in absolute overview, without taking a dimension perpendicular to itself. It is not a Cartesian theatre. This suggests that at least a certain part of the organism is directly conscious of itself. Now if we take an organism without a nervous system such as the unicellular protozoa, can it "see" itself directly, like our cortical tissue? The protozoan has no eyes or mirrors, but neither does our brain have eyes or mirrors to see what is presented to it. Ruyer infers that the protozoan has a "self-enjoyment" or primary consciousness that does not perceive external forms but has an auto-subjectivity that constitutes its very being. The term "self-enjoyment" is explicitly taken by Ruyer from the philosophy of Samuel Alexander and does not designate pleasure but rather an immediacy without objectification. This primary consciousness, manifesting itself as a unified dynamic form in micro-psychic auto-poiesis is coextensive with life, wherever formation and function are confounded. *The absolute surface (or volume) knows itself without observing itself.*

Il n'y a aucune raison de refuser à nos cellules non corticales et même non nerveuses, ou à notre organisme en général, la subjectivité, la conscience primaire, l'auto-survol, le *self-enjoyment* de leur forme propre. "Je" ne participe pas à ce *self-enjoyment* parce que "je" suis spécialisé dans la conscience sensorielle. (Ruyer 1952, 104)

There is no reason to deny to our non-cortical cells (even if they do not form part of the nervous system) or to our organism in general, a subjectivity, a primary consciousness, self-survey, the *self-enjoyment* of their own form. "I" don't participate in this *self-enjoyment* because "I" am specialised in sensory consciousness.

Equipotentiality (a term coined by the neuro-physiologist Karl Lashley in the 1920s and subsequently developed by his student Karl Pribram as the holographic theory of memory) means that in principle any part of the embryo can deputize for another and thus for the whole: a fact demonstrated by performing drastic surgery upon it. The embryonic surface does not respond like a surface with geometrical properties, *it is equipotential*. (This equipotentiality is the clue to absolute survey and nonlocality.) This is also apparently the case for cerebral activity. Ruyer argues, with an abundance of material, that this equipotentiality is the actual manifestation of an absolute domain of survey, and that the embryo, from its start in space and time, must be in contact with a metabiological *trans-*

spatial realm of mnemonic themes or morphic fields (the virtual or potential realm) that dominate the visible, structural transformations that later take place. An organic memory "invents" the brain before making use of it. *The organism is a machine that has built itself*. Not a replica or copy of itself. It is a process of self-referential molecular production. A desiring machine. The "product" is the process — is the product.... a tangled hierarchy like Escher's painting *Drawing Hands*, although dynamic and epigenetic. The hands can draw themselves differently as the process unfolds. (Distinguish autopoiesis from Derridian deconstruction. Derrida does not see that the self-referentiality of autopoiesis also embodies the logic of the supplement, which is Derrida's main weapon *against* any claim to autonomous unity.)¹⁰ Deleuze invokes Ruyer's work in *Différence et répétition*:

Quand une migration cellulaire se produit, comme le montre Raymond Ruyer, c'est l'exigence d'un "rôle" en fonction du "thème" structural à actualiser, qui détermine la situation et non pas l'inverse. Le monde est un oeuf, mais l'oeuf est lui-même un théâtre: théâtre de mise en scène, où les rôles l'emportent sur les acteurs, les espaces sur les rôles, les Idées sur les espaces. (1968, 279)

When a cellular migration takes place, as Raymond Ruyer shows, it is the requirements of a "role" insofar as this follows from a structural "theme" to be actualized which determines the situation and not the inverse. The world is an egg, but the egg is itself a theatre: a staged theatre in which the roles dominate the actors, the spaces dominate the roles and the Ideas dominate the spaces. (1995, 216)

The actualization of the virtual. Deleuze further argues (in *Bergsonisme*) that Ruyer is analogous to Bergson in appealing to an "un potential trans-spatial, mnémique et inventif," refus d'interpréter l'évolution en termes purement actuels ("inventive, mnemonic and trans-spatial potential," the refusal to interpret evolution in purely actual terms") (1966, 103/1991, 132).

Rhenan Mysticism. Medieval Monopsychism. Carlitos Castañeda. Ruyer on microphysics and his consistency with current microphysics of the brain. Quantum brain dynamics! "To continue Bergson's project today, means for example to constitute a metaphysical image of thought corresponding to the new lines, openings, traces, leaps, dynamisms, discovered by a molecular biology of the brain: new linkings and re-linkings of thought" (Deleuze 1991, Afterword to the English translation, 117).

One place to look for this molecular biology of the brain is in the work of Stuart Hameroff and Roger Penrose. How to make yourself a microtubule. Biomolecular subjectivity at the quantum level. All becomings are already molecular. Look out for Penrose's book *The Large, the Small, and the Human Mind*. And

Ilya Prigogine's *End of Certainty*. Prigogine proposes a unified formulation of quantum theory based on statistical mechanics in which the transition from potentiality to actuality is achieved by the irreversible "holistic" *self-measuring* activity of complex dynamical systems. They measure themselves without distance from themselves. They are in absolute survey. A non-subjectivist, non-biocentric, interpretation of the so-called measurement "problem" and proposed a pleased Ruyer (who wrote about the measurement "problem" and proposed a realist interpretation, 1970. Ruyer's son, Bernard Ruyer, has noted the connection between Raymond Ruyer and Roger Penrose's work). Primary true forms either require no collapse of the wave function (Prigogine and Stengers) or they self-collapse it (Penrose). This requires a revolution in quantum theory that is occurring right now. "We live in a privileged moment of the history of science" (Prigogine 1997, chapter 9). A world reduced to neither deterministic laws nor pure chance. A world as rich in possibilities for creative development as for chaotic implosion.

Ruyer argues that all the essential properties of the so-called "psychological" or psychobiological domains are already in the individualized spatio-temporal domains studied by microphysics: nonpunctual localization or nonlocality, and conjugated multiplicity of states, virtual presence of possible states (1964, 75). According to microphysics the old opposition between matter and mind disappears. Ruyer:

Le paradoxe fondamental, origine de tous les autres, est qu'un domaine de conscience, primaire ou à perception, est en "survol absolu" — absolu, c'est-à-dire, sans obligation de balayage extérieur — qu'il se possède, en une sorte d'autovision sans regard. Ce caractère n'a pas d'analogue dans la physique classique, il n'a d'analogue qu'en microphysique, et cela pour la raison que les domaines de conscience sortent directement des domaines microphysiques, qui sont déjà, eux aussi, en autosurvol.... Pour "parler" la conscience primaire, pour l'évoquer, nous sommes obligés de passer par le détour d'expressions comme "une forme se percevant elle-même", une "forme qui se voit elle-même sans yeux". Nous transformons d'abord la forme en "image-vue", la conscience primaire en conscience seconde, puis nous soulignons qu'elle n'est pas seconde avant d'être primaire.

... Mais il est très difficile de ne pas se laisser entraîner malgré soi dans la croyance qu'un être conscient de sa propre forme représente un type plus mystérieux de conscience qu'un être conscient, par modulation à partir d'appareils et d'informations sensorielles, de la forme d'objets extérieurs. Il est très difficile d'admettre qu'un protoplasme, un édifice moléculaire à liaisons délocalisées, un embryon, un tissu organique, un cortex soit conscient de lui-même (possède sa propre forme) avant de pouvoir devenir, par modulation surajoutée, conscient de la forme d'autres êtres, et sans être obligé de passer par ce détour. (1966, 285, 167)

The fundamental paradox, which is the origin of all the others, is that a domain of primary consciousness is in "absolute survey" (this is also the case for perceptual consciousness) – i.e. without any need of an external scanning – that it possesses a kind of autovision without gaze. This character has no analogy in classical physics, but it does in microphysics because the domains of consciousness come directly from microphysics, which are already in autosurvey.... In order to "speak" of primary consciousness, to evoke it, we are obliged to use expressions like a "form perceiving itself," a "form that sees itself without eyes." First we transform the form into a "visual image," primary consciousness into secondary consciousness, then we emphasise that there is no secondary consciousness before primary consciousness.

... But it is very difficult, in spite of oneself, to not be led to believe that a being that is conscious of its own form represents a more mysterious type of consciousness than a being that is conscious, through modulations of sensory information, of the form of exterior objects. It is very difficult to admit that a protoplasm, a molecular edifice with delocalised relations, an embryo, an organic tissue or a cortex, are conscious of themselves (possess their own form) before becoming, by added modulation, conscious of the form of other beings, and without being obliged to pass by this detour.

Fade out.

Other than in the work of Alliez there has been no discussion of Ruyer's important influence on Deleuze and Guattari. Only one other work in French engages with Ruyer's *oeuvre* (Chambon).

Are we ready for a non-reductionistic quantum molecular biology of the brain? Or can we be no more than apostles who draw nearer or distance themselves from the mystery of the cerebral folds. "C'est le cerveau qui pense et non l'homme, l'homme étant seulement une cristallisation cérébrale" ("It is the brain that thinks and not man — the latter being only a cerebral crystallization") (Deleuze and Guattari 1991, 197-98/1994, 210). The art of becoming like everybody else.... becoming everybody/everything. An animal elegance that aesthetically combines the cosmos with its molecular components.

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GARY GENOSKO

A Bestiary of Territoriality and Expression: Poster Fish, Bower Birds, and Spiny Lobsters

I first employed the concept of the bestiary in relation to classic psychoanalytic texts (1993). My goal was to reveal the "moral" tales — the pillars and remarkable caninophilia of the Freudian bestiary — told by the reproduction of animals found therein, as well as in the professional and domestic lives of analysts such as Freud, Ernest Jones, and Marie Bonaparte (Genosko 1994). I later suggested, somewhat schematically, that the psycho- and schizoanalytic bestiaries of Freud and Guattari overlap on the matter of how they do things with horses and porcupines (1996). From the very beginning, however, I was inspired by the extraordinarily insightful and provocative plateau 2 ("Un seul ou plusieurs loups?" ["One or Several Wolves"]) of Deleuze and Guattari's *Mille plateaux*, on Freud's case of the Wolf-Man. It seemed to me that they showed for the first time how productive the close scrutiny of the animal life of a text could be. Subsequently, scenes of animal reproduction became for me a way of reading Deleuze and Guattari's own writings; a way, then, of tracking their arguments across the plateaux by means of signs left by the animals of their own theoretical bestiary.

While this sounds remarkably simple — as simple as following fresh tracks in the sand — it takes practice, as any birder or butterfly enthusiast will tell you, and a firm grasp of the identifying features of the species at issue. Even a textual bestiary makes demands on animal fanciers, especially since the species at issue in this paper are as diverse as poster fish, bower birds, and spiny lobsters. Contextual or field conditions are not, of course, the issue, nor is it a question of mastering a scientific literature; rather, the bestiary is called upon to track these creatures as they perform varied theoretical work for Deleuze and Guattari, and to bring to bear a certain amount of background knowledge, in the manner of a naturalist, upon the discussion of the services performed by such creatures. An example is in order. It took me a long time to see what is now obvious — that the lobster of plateau 3 ("La géologie de la morale" ["On the Geology of Morals"]) is a true lobster and not the spiny lobster that most readers of plateau 11 ("De la ritournelle" ["Of the Refrain"]) will remember from the fascinating footnote on the cosmic dimension of its migration.