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Art, philosophy and the connectivity of concepts: Ricoeur and Deleuze and Guattari

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Abstract

Concepts are traditionally pictured as discrete containers that bring together objects or qualities based on the possession of shared, uniform properties. This paper focuses on a contrasting notion of the concept which holds that concepts are defined by their capacity to reach out and connect with other concepts. Two theories in recent continental philosophy maintain this view: one from Ricoeur, the other from Deleuze and Guattari. Both are offered as attempts to bring art and philosophy into relation, but they differ over how the process of connection is theorized. With Ricoeur, a concept is only a concept if it is *inherently* predisposed to connect with others, and open to being misapplied through metaphor, whereas, with Deleuze and Guattari, connection is left as the general notion of each and every concept being mutually consistent with other concepts, with the consistency attributed to the *external* action of “bridging”. The author demonstrates the impact of this difference on how the philosophers perceive the art–philosophy relation, and argues that Ricoeur is better placed to provide a theory of philosophical discourse that is open to the aesthetic. Ricoeur can *show it* through metaphor, while Deleuze and Guattari can only assert or *state* an art–

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philosophy relation through a series of technical claims. The significance of the showing–saying distinction is that it can demonstrate the depth with which conceptual connectivity is located with the philosophers’ respective ontologies and, can help to reveal the value of conceptual connectivity for that ontology.

Keywords: concept, connectivity, metaphorical, octopus, reference, rhizome, sense, show, speculative, state.

Introduction

In the history of philosophy, concepts are traditionally pictured as discrete containers that bring together objects or qualities based on the possession of shared, uniform properties, for example, Plato’s analogy of knowledge as an aviary in the *Theaetetus*¹ and Aristotle’s metaphor of predicates as containers in *Prior Analytics*.² Mathematical set theory is organized around the principle that there are collections of objects called “sets”, where the objects are identified as “members” or “elements” of a set. “Membership” is a form of “being within”, and so is being an element, in the sense that an element is a constituent of or a unit within a larger entity. The “containment” metaphor was reinforced in 1880 by the English logician John Venn who introduces the convention of representing concepts as circles in order to allow syllogistic arguments to be represented as diagrams, known as Venn diagrams.³

In contrast to this tradition, I want to consider the idea that concepts are defined by their capacity to reach outwards to connect with other concepts. Three philosophers are relevant here: Ricoeur, Deleuze and Guattari. Although

¹ Plato, *Theaetetus*, 197b–199e.

² Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*, 24b.

³ Venn, “On the diagrammatic and mechanical representation of propositions and reasonings”.

there are three philosophers, it is two theories that are produced: one by Ricoeur, the other by Deleuze and Guattari. Both theories emphasize the importance of connection to the nature of a concept, but the nature of the connection is different. Both theories also examine the connection between concepts as part of their exploration of the relation between art and philosophy. Again, the relations presented are different. I argue that Ricoeur introduces what I call an “octopus” vision of the concept, in which the capacity of a concept to be a concentration of meaning is also its capacity to reach out and be applicable to other, remote meanings. In contrast, although Deleuze and Guattari provide a vocabulary with which to describe the action of connection, the results, I maintain, are a series of statements merely asserting that connection can happen, and a terminological apparatus that is more preoccupied with territorialism than connection. The main difference between them, I propose, is over their stance on the use of concepts as referring expressions, with Ricoeur embracing the use, and Deleuze and Guattari rejecting it. I consider the consequence of this difference for a theory of conceptual connectivity and for the relation between art and philosophy.

Art and philosophy

Both Ricoeur and Deleuze and Guattari examine the connection between concepts as part of their exploration of the relation between art and philosophy. Ricoeur’s theory forms part of his account of metaphor in *The Rule of Metaphor* (*La métaphore vive*). Metaphor, he argues, is constitutive of our capacity to describe at all. To understand it, he argues, we have to take the widest view of language possible, where language is active, in operation, and where it has an interest; in other words, language as discourse. He formulates metaphor as the intersection of two discourses: metaphorical and speculative. Metaphorical discourse is the domain in which new expressions are created but not conceptualized or translated; it is where inventive metaphors receive their first outing. Instances of the discourse might be a poem, a narrative or an essay. Speculative discourse is the domain of the concept and, furthermore, the domain in which the concept

can be predicated of an object. It is the discourse which focuses the play of meanings thrown up by metaphor into a proposition which revivifies our perception of the world. It is also the discourse that is at work in philosophy, since “it expresses the systematic nature of the conceptual” and is active

in all the speculative attempts to order the “great genera”, the “categories of being”, the “categories of understanding”, “philosophical logic”, the “principal elements of representation”, or however one wants to express [the systematic nature of the conceptual].⁴

The characterization of the metaphorical and the speculative – and the fields in which they find expression, namely the poetic and the philosophical – *as intersecting discourses* means “intersection” is also Ricoeur’s understanding of the relation between art and philosophy. It also means that metaphor, in as much as it is constituted by the intersection of metaphorical and speculative discourse, is the relation between art and philosophy made manifest in a single, albeit tensional, form.

The importance of the productive tension between metaphorical and speculative discourse for Ricoeur cannot be overstated. Metaphorical discourse creates the utterance “*A* is *B*” together with all the “nonsensical” possibilities that it implies, and through its encounter with the speculative, the play of possibilities is resolved and *A*’s *B*-like nature is conceptualized. Metaphor “is living”, he proclaims, “by virtue of the fact that it [metaphorically] introduces the spark of imagination into a “thinking more” at the conceptual [speculative] level”.⁵ As such, metaphorical discourse is *the condition of possibility of speculative discourse*. That is to say, world-directed, claim-making speculative discourse can only get underway within the play of possibilities created when a concept from one frame of

⁴ Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 300.

⁵ Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 303.

reference is applied to another in metaphorical discourse. As Ricoeur makes the point:

On the one hand, speculative discourse has its *condition of possibility* in the semantic dynamism of metaphorical utterance, [while] on the other hand, speculative discourse has its *necessity* in itself, in putting the resources of conceptual articulation to work.⁶

Speculative discourse “has its *necessity* in itself”, according to Ricoeur, in the sense that the resources of conceptual articulation “belong to the mind itself, ... are the mind itself reflecting upon itself”.⁷ Despite the stress on interplay, speculative discourse is shown to be the principal element in Ricoeur’s theory, since it is the mode of discourse which resolves the “nonsensical” possibilities of the metaphorical “*A is B*” into appropriate, worldly meaning; that is to say, it is the speculative which assigns metaphor its “ontological vehemence”.⁸ The interpretation of metaphor, he adds, “is the work of concepts” and “consequently a struggle for univocity”.⁹

Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of the concept is presented in their 1991 book *What is Philosophy?* as part of an exploration of the nature of philosophy and its relationship with art and science. Philosophy, they declare, is “the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts”, in the sense, for example, that Kant introduces a new concept of time.¹⁰ Instead of the Newtonian concept of a linear succession of episodes, Kant presents time as a three-fold principle of anticipation, retention, and succession, fundamental to the organization of experience. Concepts have to be made: they are “not waiting for us ready-made, like heavenly bodies. There is no heaven for concepts. They must

⁶ Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 296.

⁷ Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 296; original emphasis.

⁸ Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 300.

⁹ Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 302.

¹⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 5, 32.

be invented, fabricated, or rather created and would be nothing without their creator's signature".¹¹ It is philosophy, *and only philosophy*, that is the creator of concepts. "Sciences, arts, and philosophies are all equally creative", they assert, "although only philosophy creates concepts in the strict sense".¹² No account is given of what this "strict sense" might be. Reference is made to Nietzsche's declaration, in *The Will to Power*, that philosophers "must no longer accept concepts as a gift, not merely purify and polish them, but first *make* and *create* them, present them and make them convincing", and it is pointed out that, although Plato said "Ideas must be contemplated", he nevertheless first "had to create the concept of Idea".¹³ But these observations remain at the level of stating "philosophers create concepts" and go no deeper into explicating the meaning of "strict creation".

In contrast, art, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is the formation of sensations, which they call "percepts" and "affects". Art, they declare, makes experience *stand on its own*, distinct from the artist and her original experience; perception is made to stand on its own, apart from its object, as "percept", and affection is given form distinct from the moment as "affect". Art is "a being of sensation and nothing else: it exists in itself".¹⁴ Science, they maintain, "*passes from chaotic virtuality to the states of affairs and bodies that actualize it*", which is to say that it creates the functions and functives (components of functions) that allow propositions in discursive systems to refer to states of affairs.¹⁵

Art, science and philosophy are theorized as part of Deleuze and Guattari's immanent ontology, immanent in that it focuses on experience in itself, as its own condition, and not experience which belongs to a subject. As such, the component terms introduced above – percept and affect (sensation); functions; and concepts – are not items that can be apportioned to either human

¹¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 5.

¹² Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 5.

¹³ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 5–6.

¹⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 164.

¹⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 155–6.

subjects or “real world” objects, but instead occur within their respective “planes” – of composition; of reference; and of philosophy – where “plane” does the philosophical work of being the field or surface wherein events, i.e. percepts, functions, concepts, arise.

The relation between art, science and philosophy, for Deleuze and Guattari, is one of “intersection and intertwining”, with sensation, function, concept, and their respective planes, as the participating entities:

[Art, science and philosophy] intersect and intertwine but without synthesis or identification. With its concepts, philosophy brings forth events. Art erects monuments with its sensations [i.e., percepts and affects]. Science constructs states of affairs with its functions. A rich tissue of correspondences can be established between the planes. But the network has its culminating points, where sensation itself becomes sensation of concept or function, where the concept becomes concept of function or of sensation, and where the function becomes function of sensation or concept. And none of these elements can appear without the other being still to come, still indeterminate or unknown. Each created element on a plane calls on other heterogeneous elements, which are still to be created on other planes: thought as heterogenesis.¹⁶

An example of intersection given by Deleuze and Guattari is the development of the thickness of paint in modern art, when “the surface can be furrowed or the plane of composition can take on thickness insofar as the material rises up, independently of depth or perspective, independently of shadows and even of the chromatic order of colour”.¹⁷ From here, the philosopher Hubert Damisch “turn[s] the thickness of the plane into a genuine concept by showing that ‘plaiting could well fulfil a role for future painting similar to that performed by

¹⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 199.

¹⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 194.

perspective”¹⁸ Thus, the percept of thickness becomes a concept of thickness, with the potential for connections with other concepts that is intrinsic to Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of a concept.

Although both Ricoeur and Deleuze and Guattari maintain that their accounts of art and philosophy have them in states of interaction and intertwinement, the nature of the interaction and intertwinement is different. The fact that Ricoeur refers to a mind, belonging to a subject, whereas Deleuze and Guattari present an immanent, subject-less ontology, is an important difference, but it does not have a bearing on how they understand the connectivity of concepts. The vocabularies that are used to articulate their art–philosophy relationships are also not influenced by the differences that can be found between a subject–object and an immanent ontology. With Ricoeur, metaphor stimulates speculative thought: it “introduces the spark of imagination into a “thinking more” at the conceptual [speculative] level”.¹⁹ Although speculative discourse “has its *necessity* in itself”, “belong[s] to the mind itself” and is “the mind itself reflecting upon itself”, its condition of possibility, its mobilization, is given by metaphorical discourse.

In contrast, with Deleuze and Guattari, despite the claim for “intersection and intertwinement” between art and philosophy, there is a propriety at work that tries to ensure that each way of thinking remains on its own plane. With the Damisch example above, it is the philosopher and not the artist or art theorist who creates the concept of plaiting, despite artists’ pursuit of medium-specificity prior to the philosopher’s 1984 publication. “Art thinks no less than philosophy”, Deleuze and Guattari maintain, “but it thinks through percepts and affects”. This, they are keen to point out, “does not mean that the two entities do not often pass into each other in a becoming that sweeps them both up in an intensity which co-determines them”.²⁰ Yet when it comes to describing this “passing into each other”, it is not clear what the “passing”

¹⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 195.

¹⁹ Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 303.

²⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 66.

amounts to. At this point, they refer to the work of Michel Guérin who, on his own website, describes himself as a writer *and* a philosopher, so straight away it is uncertain whether we are dealing with an artist (as writer) or a philosopher.²¹ To serve Deleuze and Guattari's illustration, he needs to be a philosopher. They declare that Guérin makes "a profound discovery of the existence of conceptual personae [concepts with the power to determine the course of a philosopher's work]²² at the heart of philosophy". But rather than articulate these conceptual personae *conceptually*, Guérin presents them

within a "logodrama" or a "figurology" that puts affect into thought. This means that the concept as such can be the concept of an affect, just as the affect can be the affect of the concept. The plane of composition of art and the plane of immanence of philosophy can slip into each other to the degree that parts of one may be occupied by entities of the other [*au point que des pans de l'un soient occupés par des entités de l'autre*]. In fact, in each case the plane and that which occupies it are like two relatively distinct and heterogeneous parts. A thinker may therefore decisively modify what thinking means, draw up a new image of thought, and institute a new plane of immanence. But, instead of creating new concepts that occupy it, they populate it with other instances, with other poetic, novelistic, or even pictorial or musical entities [*mais, au lieu de créer de nouveaux concepts qui l'occupent, il le peuple avec d'autres instances, d'autres entités, poétiques, romanesques, ou même picturales ou musicales*].²³

But at the very moment when it would be helpful to see how Deleuze and Guattari's vocabulary of percepts, affects and concepts enables the description of

²¹ The website of Michel Guérin can be found at <http://www.guerin-figurologie.fr/p/bienvenue.html> (accessed 13 June 2018).

²² Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 64.

²³ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 66–7; *Qu'est ce que la philosophie?*, 65.

the intersection and intertwinement of art and philosophy, they are not to be seen. Instead, a general description is given in terms of “other instances, with other poetic, novelistic, or even pictorial or musical entities”. But where do such “entities” sit within Deleuze and Guattari’s system? They are presumably not concepts, as we are told that, on this occasion, the philosopher chooses not to create a concept. Are they percepts or affects? Perhaps the latter, since we are told that Guérin puts “affect into thought”. But what is the effect of putting “affect into thought”? With Ricoeur, while he identifies two discourses, metaphorical and speculative, their intersection is explained through the former being the generation of heterogeneous possibilities that call upon the unifying power of the latter. But with Deleuze and Guattari, they have at this crucial point to rely upon the general notions of “other poetic, novelistic, or even pictorial or musical entities”. Any hope that their notions of the intersection and intertwinement of art and philosophy might be articulated further is dashed by a propriety which ensures that concept and affect remain “like two relatively distinct and heterogeneous parts”, with the “each to its own” impulse reinforced by the metaphor of “occupation”: “in each case the plane and that which occupies it”.

The connectivity of concepts

Let us turn our attention to the theories of the connectivity of concepts that are given by Ricoeur and Deleuze and Guattari. The ways in which they formulate connectivity *and the notion of a “concept”* are different. What Ricoeur understands by the notion can be extracted from his theory of metaphor. Ricoeur works from the perspective of the interactionist theory of metaphor developed by Max Black (1962, 1979).²⁴ Central to the interactionist account is the idea that metaphor is creative: the interaction between its two subject terms provides the condition for

²⁴ See Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*, and “More about metaphor”.

a meaning which neither of the subject terms possesses independently of the metaphorical context. The interaction, as a process, brings into being what Black terms an “implication-complex”,²⁵ a system of associated implications shared by the linguistic community *as well as* an impulse of free meaning, free in that it is meaning which was unavailable prior to the metaphor’s introduction. Somehow, interaction admits a meaning that is not already deducible from or present in the lexicon of a community. The creativity of metaphor is described by Ricoeur in the following terms:

Does not the fittingness [of metaphor]... indicate that language not only has organized reality in a different way, but also made manifest a way of being of things, which is brought to language thanks to semantic innovation? It would seem that the enigma of metaphorical discourse is that it “invents” in both senses of the word: what it creates, it discovers; and what it finds, it invents.²⁶

Metaphor has the double aspect of being both creation and discovery because when two terms are juxtaposed unconventionally in a metaphor, metaphorical discourse emphasizes the surprise and the novelty of the combination, while speculative discourse seeks to make sense of it by working through all the ways in which “*A is B*” might refer to *A* now that the idea of it has been transformed by its new *B*-nature.

The model for the metaphorical–speculative contrast is the distinction drawn by Gottlob Frege in 1892 between “sense” and “reference”.²⁷ Frege makes the distinction to show that words with the same reference can nevertheless have different senses, for example, “Venus”, “Morning Star” and “Evening Star” all refer to the same celestial object, but their senses – the qualities that might prompt a writer to choose one over the others, such as

²⁵ Black, “More about metaphor”, 29.

²⁶ Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 239.

²⁷ See Frege, “On sense and reference”.

association, mood, character – are very different. However, for Ricoeur, there is a dynamic interplay between sense and reference. The site of the interplay is predication: the creation of a sentence by attaching a verb or a verb-phrase to a noun, as in “the cat sleeps”, “the electron orbits the nucleus”. “In ordinary language”, he explains,

we master the predicative use of abstract meanings only by relating them to objects, which we designate in the referential mode. This is possible because the predicate is such that it performs its characteristic function only in the context of the sentence, when it targets this or that relatively isolatable aspect within a determined referent... So we master meaning by varying the conditions of use in relation to different referents. Conversely, we investigate new referents only by describing them as precisely as possible. Thus the referential field can extend beyond the things we are able to show, and even beyond visible, perceptible things. Language lends itself to this by allowing the construction of complex referential expressions using abstract terms that are already understood, i.e. definite descriptions in Russell’s sense. In this way, predication and reference lend support to one another, whether we relate new predicates to familiar referents, or whether, in order to explore a referential field that is not directly accessible, we use predicative expressions whose sense has already been mastered.²⁸

The *sense* of a word, how we understand it in the abstract as a concept and the possible uses to which it might be put, is made apparent through the objects that the word can be used to describe and, reciprocally, the *reference* of a word, the object that a word can be used to describe, is conveyed through a description that uses words the senses of which we understand. For Ricoeur, sense and reference are not just complementary terms which happen to form a partnership

²⁸ Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 297–8.

but elements which are fused together in a “continuing Odyssey”:²⁹ established referents help to determine sense, and established senses help to determine referents. The application of this interplay to metaphorical and speculative discourse, the prime movers in this Odyssey, is evident in the final sentence of the quotation: the two discourses sustain one another through relating new predicates to familiar referents (the formation of concepts in speculative discourse), or by using predicative expressions whose sense has already been mastered to open up a new referential field (the unconventional but generative combination of terms in metaphorical discourse). Thus, the capacity of a concept to be a concept, to apply to the things it does in a familiar, referential way, *is conditional upon its capacity to be stretched and extended on to other things*. Speculative discourse, the domain of the concept and claim-making, has metaphorical discourse as its condition of possibility because it is the field of possible meanings generated by metaphorical discourse that provides the ground whereupon a concept can set to work as a concept, showing how some of these meanings can be drawn upon to form a novel, insightful claim about the world.³⁰

I suggest that Ricoeur’s account of the concept amounts to visualizing concepts not as containers but as being “tentacled” (my term): a concept is only a concept if it is predisposed to connect with others, and open to being stretched and creatively misapplied. I recommend depicting or diagramming the concept as an octopus or jellyfish or echinoderm (one variety of which is the starfish): any creature with a central body, to signify that something particular is being referred to, but surrounded by tentacles that reach out to make contact with other creatures or conditions. Visually, jellyfish and some echinoderms are probably better suited to displaying a centre with radial tentacles, but I think the notion of an “octopus concept” is more potent, if only because of its “oct”–“con” assonance, and the rhythm of its consonance.

For Deleuze and Guattari, the concept is a principle of connection, both internally and externally, that is to say, a concept is made of other concepts

²⁹ Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 298.

³⁰ Part of this paragraph first appeared in my book *Art, Research, Philosophy*, 157–8.

internally, while also reaching out to other concepts externally. They refer to these aspects respectively as the “endoconsistency” (*endo-consistance*) and the “exoconsistency” (*exo-consistance*) of the concept.³¹ The endoconsistency of a concept is defined by the “inseparability” of the components that make up the inside of the concept.³² An example is the concept of “other person” which includes the concepts of “face” and of “our passing from one world to another” (in the sense that we recognize another person as having their own world or life-world). The exoconsistency of the concept is its capacity to form “bridges” with other concepts.³³ The exoconsistency of the concept “other person” might be the “expression of a possible world in a perceptual field” and “the possible occupants of this field, perceived in a new way”. The internal and external consistencies of the concept are such that each concept “partially overlaps, has a zone of neighbourhood [*zone de voisinage*], or a threshold of indiscernibility with another one”.³⁴ Yet each concept is also “in a state of *survey* [*survol*] in relation to its components, endlessly traversing them according to an order without distance”.³⁵ Deleuze and Guattari summarize the point by announcing that “zones and bridges are the joints of the concept”, “*les zones et les ponts sont les joints du concept*”.³⁶ It is because a concept is made of other concepts internally, while also reaching out to other concepts externally, that it is never finite, definite or ultimately definable. Rather, it is always a *becoming*, always in a state of having its endoconsistency and exoconsistency flexed by the push-and-pull of history, problems and situations, and the formation of new concepts, whose own endoconsistencies and exoconsistencies go on to join the process.

There is a similarity between the models of the concept given by Ricoeur and Deleuze and Guattari. Both present the concept as a double action

³¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 19–20.

³² Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 20.

³³ Deleuze and Guattari, *Qu'est ce que la philosophie?*, 25; *What is Philosophy?*, 20.

³⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 19.

³⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 20.

³⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *Qu'est ce que la philosophie?*, 25; *What is Philosophy?*, 20.

that combines components gathering together to form a neighbourhood with a capacity to extend to concepts that are considered to be beyond that neighbourhood. However, there are two differences. The first concerns the distance covered by the external reach of a concept. Firstly, with Ricoeur, the capacity of a concept to apply to the things it does in a familiar, referential way, is conditional upon its capacity to be stretched and extended onto other, *remote* things in a metaphor. This is a defining property of metaphor: the description of one thing in terms of a concept that is ordinarily considered to be remote from it. The flexibility that enables a concept to be applied in intricate and specific ways in what becomes a “home” referential field is also the flexibility that enables it to leap across to an alien field of sense. However, with Deleuze and Guattari, the contrast between endoconsistency and exoconsistency is characterized simply in terms of internal and external, and not local and remote. We are told that, in terms of its exoconsistency, the concept is “in a state of *survey* [*survol*] in relation to its components, endlessly traversing them according to an order without distance”, but “without distance” is not “remoteness”.³⁷ “An order without distance” suggests that questions of proximity are not relevant to the concept’s external connections. The two consistencies are likened to “zones and bridges” respectively, but it is uncertain how the “bridge” metaphor is to be interpreted. A

³⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 20. As Tomlinson and Burchell note in their “Translators’ Introduction”, “it is difficult to find a single English equivalent for the word *survol*”. The word comes from “*survoler*”, meaning “to fly over” or “to skim or rapidly run one’s eyes over something”. Tomlinson and Burchell base their translation on the work of philosopher Raymond Ruyer. In his 1952 book *Neo-Finalisme*, Ruyer uses “*survol*” to refer to the sense of a surveilling “I-unity” that emerges from the subjective experience of the visual field. Tomlinson and Burchell take issue with the idea of an “I-unity” that stands above subjective experience, on the basis of their commitment to the philosophy of immanence advanced by Deleuze and Guattari, in which the apparent unity of subjective experience is a form of “self-enjoyment” that does not require the postulation of an emergent, external “I-unity”. Despite this disagreement, they nevertheless use Ruyer’s understanding of “*survol*” to translate the term as “survey”. See Tomlinson and Burchell, “Translators’ Introduction”, ix–x.

bridge usually connects *neighbours* who are separated by an obstacle or other intervening object, such as water or parts of a city that need to be traversed at speed, but does normally connect remote regions. If “neighbourhood” is a property of endoconsistency, and “bridging” is a metaphor for exoconsistency, then it is reasonable to assume that exoconsistency can be thought metaphorically in spatial terms. It is just that the only spatial quality that Deleuze and Guattari make significant is externality, rather than proximity or remoteness. Although remoteness is not identified with exoconsistency, it is included elsewhere within Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy as “lines of flight”, “the openings that”, as Tomlinson and Burchell describe them, “allow thought to escape from the constraints that seek to define and enclose creativity”, but these are not explicitly identified with the exoconsistency of the concept.³⁸

The second difference is that, with Deleuze and Guattari, the double action is merely stated: a concept has an endoconsistency and an exoconsistency. They have to identify “exoconsistency” as a “bridging” action, whereas with Ricoeur the connectivity is already contained within the concentration–extension relation of the octopus. With Ricoeur, each part of the action is dependent on another: the two discourses sustain one another through relating new predicates to familiar referents (the formation of concepts in speculative discourse), or by using predicative expressions whose sense has already been mastered to open up a new referential field (the combination of terms in metaphor). Deleuze and Guattari do refer to the concept possessing an “inseparability”, but this is with regard to the “zones, thresholds, or becomings” that constitute the concept’s endoconsistency, and not to the idea that endoconsistency and exoconsistency are inseparable.³⁹

Reference versus connection

³⁸ Tomlinson and Burchell, “Translators’ Introduction”, viii.

³⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 20.

The difference is deepened by Deleuze and Guattari when they announce that a concept cannot be subject to the requirement of reference, that is to say, a concept cannot be required to refer to an entity that predates the concept's own coming into being. This, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is what happens in science: "the object of science is not concepts but rather functions that are presented as propositions in discursive systems", and logic is the process that "wants to turn concepts into functions".⁴⁰ Logic does this, they maintain, by creating "one or more 'ordered pairs'" between concepts so that "a relation of dependence or correspondence (necessary reason) defines the function". "Dependence" is meant here in the sense that the function, for example, "is a man" depends upon an independent variable for its completion, e.g. "John", to give "John is a man". "Correspondence" is meant here in the sense that, in order for the function to have a truth value, i.e. to be either true or false, it has to refer to one member of the set of objects that can determine the truth or falsity of the function, i.e. one member of the set of objects that constitutes the extension of the function. But, Deleuze and Guattari assert,

in becoming propositional, the concept loses all the characteristics it possessed as [a] philosophical concept: its self-reference, its endoconsistency and its exoconsistency. This is because a regime of independence (of variables, axioms, and undecidable propositions) has replaced that of inseparability... The concept in general no longer has a combination but an arithmetical number; the undecidable no longer indicates the inseparability of intensional components (zone of indiscernibility) but, on the contrary, the necessity of distinguishing them according to the requirements of reference, which renders all consistency (self-consistency) "uncertain".⁴¹

⁴⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 117, 135.

⁴¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 137–8; original emphasis.

The philosophical concept, for Deleuze and Guattari, brings into being its own self-reference in terms of the component concepts that are inseparable from its internal consistency, and in terms of the component concepts it “traverses” externally “according to an order without distance”.⁴² The endoconsistent and exoconsistent possibilities that exist within conceptual self-reference are lost as soon as a concept is used in a proposition to determine whether or not something is the case. This something will not be part of the philosophical, self-referential inseparability, but will be an independent, already existing object, studied purely in binary terms to determine whether or not the proposition is true or false, to determine whether or not an object is a member of a set. It is perhaps unsurprising to find that, when it comes to illustrating the fact that propositions refer beyond themselves to already-existing objects in the world, Deleuze and Guattari allude to Frege’s example from “On sense and reference”: “Venus (the evening star and the morning star) is a planet that takes less time than the earth to complete its revolution”.⁴³

So Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of a concept cannot be a referring expression because, as they see it, reference directs thought away from the concept’s connection-generating, internal and external consistencies, and towards an item in the world with the sole interest of determining whether it establishes the truth or falsity of a proposition. In contrast, reference for Ricoeur is all the applications that the concept receives in speculative, claim-making discourse that allow it to acquire rich and varied associations, and it is these associations that in turn go on to become the tentacles of future, novel connections. Ricoeur has this wider understanding of reference: (a) because he considers it in relation to speculative discourse, which covers all claim-making discourse, not just scientific; and (b) because it is probably a reflection of his phenomenological background and, therefore, an expression of a commitment to claim-making discourse being part of a life-world of activity. As far as Deleuze and Guattari are concerned, the rub here is not so much that their territorialism treats reference as being a one-

⁴² Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 20.

⁴³ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 137.

dimensional, scientific interest, but that they dismiss reference because it introduces pre-existing properties, and these would interfere with or cancel the novelty created by a new concept.

But the stance against a referring concept on the grounds that it introduces qualities attached to pre-existing objects that countermand the novelty and particularity of the new concept is puzzling, because Deleuze and Guattari understand the new concept to be constituted by its internal and external connections with other, *pre-existent* concepts. So why is contact with pre-existent concepts that present themselves through reference *distinct from* pre-existent concepts that come from thought? The difference is not a matter of pre-existence, since this is a property that both kinds of concept share. The nearest that Deleuze and Guattari get to explaining the point is the claim (quoted earlier) that, with the referring concept, “the necessity of distinguishing [its components] according to the requirements of reference... renders all consistency (self-consistency) ‘uncertain’”.⁴⁴ But why should the “requirements of reference” make self-referring self-consistency “uncertain”, especially if it is recognized that self-referring self-consistency, on Deleuze and Guattari’s terms, involves connections internally and externally with other concepts? The only explanation would appear to be that Deleuze and Guattari understand reference to admit connections or consistencies that are less forceful in terms of generating further, novel, internal and external connections than those made in thought alone. But this seems to be the product of a narrow perception of reference. It cannot be denied that there are occasions when reference is made solely with the ambition of determining, for example, whether or not Venus is a member of the set of planets that “takes less time than the earth to complete its revolution”. But this is not the full extent of the meaningfulness of reference. Reference can be made when one wants to call attention to an object, or to individuate a particular aspect of an object, or to explain the operation of an object, or to propose a new property for an object, or to place an object in relation to another object. In short, there is a wide network of possible situations in which reference occurs, and it is this network of uses

⁴⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 137.

that Ricoeur appeals to, via Frege, as part of his claim that “predication and reference lend support to one another”.⁴⁵

The problem with Deleuze and Guattari’s position is that it prevents the concept from being subject to the force of other concepts that reference and observation (for observation also involves reference) can supply. It suggests that observations made of objects in the world are somehow lacking when it comes to creating connections that can form endoconsistencies and exoconsistencies. It is as if they think that the potential for conceptual connection will be impeded by description’s attachment to material things. But this fails to recognize the breadth and diversity of description that can be brought by aesthetic judgment and metaphor. Although it is not surprising that metaphor does not feature in their account, given their dismissal of it in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. They dismiss it on the grounds that it is restricted to making connections between a proper meaning and a figurative meaning.⁴⁶ But this is a narrow understanding of metaphor. It is in the spirit of I.A. Richards’ account, where it is taken to be a one-way process of ascription, borrowing properties from an object, the “vehicle”, and applying them figuratively to a subject, the “tenor”.⁴⁷ However, there are other theories, such as Black’s and Ricoeur’s, that find within the figure greater, epistemological and ontological significance. Deleuze and Guattari do acknowledge that, through the intersection and intertwinement of art, science and philosophy, percepts and functions can become percepts and functions *of concepts*, and that concepts can become concepts *of percepts and functions*,⁴⁸ but no account is given of how percepts and functions might contribute to the internal and external consistency of concepts. Furthermore, the example that Deleuze and Guattari give of a percept becoming a concept – in which paint acquires a thickness to become the concept of “plaiting” – is art being turned into a concept by a philosopher, as if the philosopher’s proficiency in concept-

⁴⁵ Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 298.

⁴⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, 22.

⁴⁷ Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 96.

⁴⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 199.

formation is necessary in order to realize the potential to become a concept within the percept. The irony of *What is Philosophy?* is that a project which claims to place art, science and philosophy in a state of intertwinement finds itself largely confining each subject's component terms within their own territories. One cannot but help think that the philosophers who are so keen to advocate projects of deterritorialization do so largely because their own thinking is determined by operations that are confined to their territories.

One way to sharpen the contrast between Ricoeur's and Deleuze and Guattari's approaches to the connectivity of concepts, I propose, is to introduce the showing–saying distinction: Ricoeur *shows* the connectivity of concepts while Deleuze and Guattari *say* it. In philosophy, the showing–saying distinction is most commonly associated with Ludwig Wittgenstein's project, in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, to demonstrate that propositions can only *show* the relationship they have with the world, and not *say* it.⁴⁹ However, I am adopting the distinction in a different (but possibly related) sense as it is used in the arts, especially in drama, to distinguish between meanings that occur respectively in either a diegetic or a non-diegetic way. With the former, meaning is shown through elements that are already present on the stage, in the world of the play, e.g. characters, dialogue, props, scenery, whereas with the latter, meaning is stated, usually by a narrator who is outside the world of the play, using words that are comparatively remote from the scene, and that do not draw upon any of the potential for meaning that is offered by the scene. For example, a character might *show* anxiety through her posture, her downward glance, her silence and the tightness with which she grasps a garment owned by her missing partner, while the same emotion might be *stated*, albeit with less effect, by a narrator saying “Pearl waits anxiously for her missing partner to return”. The significance of the showing–saying distinction is that it can demonstrate the depth with which conceptual connectivity is located in the philosophers' respective ontologies and, within this, it can help to reveal the value of conceptual connectivity for that ontology. The action of “showing” emphasizes that elements already in play

⁴⁹ Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 3.262, 4.022, 4.1212, 5.535, 5.62, 6.36.

contain the resources necessary to generate meanings that exceed what those elements are ordinarily taken to be, as in the tightness with which a garment is grasped becoming an expression of anxiety.

I think Ricoeur's account shows connectivity because he is able, via Frege, to rely upon the mutually defining, octopus-like processes of concentration through reference and extension through metaphor *that are already underway in the world*. It is precisely because the processes are mutually defining and at work in the world that he does not have to nominalize it and introduce an ontological coinage that is external to the in-the-world push-and-pull of concentration and extension. This may well be an expression of Ricoeur's phenomenological heritage: to find within the detail that grows with words in use *the force that motivates a process in which part of the world is seen anew*. The phenomenological heritage here is the recognition that whatever is in use, by dint of the fact that it is used and at the centre of a series of social and bodily interactions, acquires the capacity to disclose meaning and understanding in ways that far exceed its use. In terms of metaphor, the detail that grows with words in use becomes the force that enables a word to leap over into an entirely remote realm to become the basis of a figure that illuminates the new realm through the detail it acquired from its home territory.

With Ricoeur, the "already in play" nature of his theory is exhibited by the octopus-like nature of the concept: what is concentrated in one area becomes the motivation for the tentacles reaching out to other areas. The precision and observation that come with reference are effectively preparing for the moment when the referring expression shoots out, tentacle-like, to become the origin of new sense when applied to another concept that, in turn, creates a new referent. This means that any careful looking or thoughtful reflection that might be devoted to one area of life, as well as providing insight into that area of life, will also be laying out precise description that has the potential to become the lens through which an alien concept might be viewed in the future. On this understanding, the depth with which conceptual connectivity is located within Ricoeur's ontology is such that connectivity and ontology amount to the same thing: each and every concept can in principle be part of the process wherein

established referents help to generate new meanings, and established meanings help to determine referents. The value of conceptual connectivity for Ricoeur's ontology is that it makes prominent the regions of activity where the effects of conceptual connectivity can be witnessed or appreciated: establishing referents in detail, and generating new meanings from those referents that will go on to become new referents.

The fact that Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy amounts to a "saying" of conceptual connectivity, I think, means that conceptual connectivity is not deeply rooted within their ontology. Theirs is an ontology of immanence and becoming in which identities (of beings, objects, ideas) are formed through a series of interacting differences, where identities take shape as expressions or intensities or folds within this play of difference. Immanence is the "plane" of difference out of which identities form; it is, as Colebrook writes, "a pure flow of life and perception without any distinct perceivers".⁵⁰ "Experience", for Deleuze and Guattari, refers not to experiences of a pre-constituted subject (myself or another), but about those events that disrupt experience in a way that my subjectivity *becomes possible*, with the principal forms of experiential disruption being percepts, affects and concepts. Experiential disruption is a positive event, as far as Deleuze and Guattari are concerned, because it forms the expressions or intensities that constitute a life of becoming, a life in which there is no underlying substrate or a fixed reference point, but instead sequences of flows, clusterings, relations and transitions.

The shallowness of conceptual connectivity within Deleuze and Guattari's ontology is evident in the following ways. While concepts might be one of the principal forms of experiential disruption, the possibility that disruption can be furthered through one concept connecting with another is limited. Deleuze and Guattari have to name exoconsistency as a "bridging" action. There is no inherent connection between the "inseparable" components that form endoconsistency and the "bridged" components that are taken up through exoconsistency. Also, because exoconsistency is "without distance",

⁵⁰ Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze*, 74.

there is no indication that the heterogeneity might be a remote one, where “remoteness” could be an indication of constructive force. In order to introduce an ontology of “intersection and intertwinement” between science, art and philosophy, Deleuze and Guattari resort to confining them within the respective ontological categories of “percept”, “affect” and “concept”, with the possibility of intersection as it applies to the concept limited to the possibility that a philosopher identifies a respect in which a percept or an affect can be turned into a concept. Again, there is no inherent relation between concepts in use as referring expressions, on the one hand, and their capacity to reach out to create new senses through their application to remote concepts, on the other. Furthermore, the idea that a concept might open on to remote meanings is restricted on the understanding that conceptual connectivity is lost as soon as a concept is used as a referring expression in a proposition to determine whether or not something is the case.

That Deleuze and Guattari have to state conceptual connectivity also means the value of conceptual connectivity for their ontology is put in question. Without the mutually defining forces and relations that are available to Ricoeur, Deleuze and Guattari are left in a situation where connection seems to happen for connection’s sake, and nothing more. We are told that conceptual connection occurs, and that this might contribute to the experiential disruptions that create the flows, clusterings, relations and transitions in a life of becoming, but the particular effects they create or consequences they produce are not spelled out. According to Rajchman, the ambition to form conceptual connections for Deleuze and Guattari is part of their project against traditional philosophical logic (including Fregean logic), cliché and stupidity. This involves them working “with zones that are precisely not completely determined or localizing, where things may go off in unseen directions or work in unregulated ways”, but what this leads to other than the formation of connections is unclear, beyond the suggestion that the philosopher can form new concepts based on the affects produced in art. Thus, by simply saying that connection occurs, it would appear that no accompanying or corresponding ontological structure or elements has been introduced that would let the consequences of conceptual connection be

manifest within the terms of their own ontology. To borrow some phrasing that appears in Deleuze and Guattari's account of the rhizome (which I introduce properly below), connection for them is the sequence of "and... and... and..." without any pauses in which to enjoy the new meanings and implications that spring out from the connections.⁵¹

Relevance of the rhizome?

Given that *What is Philosophy?* formulates the relation between art, science and philosophy as one of "intersection and intertwinement", it is surprising that the book does not mention the "rhizome". In *A Thousand Plateaus*, from 1980, Deleuze and Guattari declare that thought in the history of philosophy is "tree-like": individuals are attached to a concept or ideas are attached to a central thesis, like branches to a trunk.⁵² In contrast, they adopt the "rhizome" – an underground stem that grows horizontally and pushes up lateral shoots – as a model of thought in which claims are linked not by continuous, vertical progression, but instead through leaps of association and the relation of seemingly unconnected objects or ideas. The rhizome is a "principle of connection and heterogeneity": "any point of a rhizome", they declare, "can be connected to anything other, and must be. This is very different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order".⁵³ Why a rhizome "must be" connected to anything other is not explained, so it is not apparent whether the necessity is simply biological or a property of the connectivity that they are ascribing to rhizomatic thinking. However, a further account of its operation is provided:

⁵¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 25.

⁵² The 'tree-like' metaphor originally features in Deleuze and Guattari's critique of Freud but is nonetheless representative of Deleuze's stance with regard to philosophy's orthodox conception of thought. See Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia Volume 1*.

⁵³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 7.

A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles. A semiotic chain is like a tuber agglomerating very diverse acts, not only linguistic, but also perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive: there is no language in itself, nor are there any linguistic universals, only a throng of dialects, patois, slangs, and specialized languages.⁵⁴

While it is clear that the rhizome is a principle of connection, it is not apparent where it stands in terms of the distinction between art, science and philosophy, and their respective units of operation, affect, percept and concept. If a rhizome “ceaselessly establishes connections” in this way, including connections between “circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles”, then it would seem that the rhizome might be able to create connections between affect, percept and concept, but it’s not apparent how. For example, might it assist in generating percepts of concepts, and concepts of percepts?

However, one reason why the rhizome does not warrant comparison alongside Deleuze and Guattari’s percept–affect–concept terminology is that it is a more generalized principle of connection than the specific, three-term ontology given in *What is Philosophy?* A good indication of the range of connection included by the rhizome is the example of the relationship between a wasp and an orchid: “the wasp is... deterritorialized, becoming a piece in the orchid’s reproductive apparatus. But it reterritorializes the orchid by transporting its pollen. Wasp and orchid, as heterogeneous elements, form a rhizome”.⁵⁵ So as well as forming connections through “agglomerating... [the] linguistic,... perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive”, it would seem that rhizomic connection can also be based on ecological or environmental relationships between organisms. Its

⁵⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 7.

⁵⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 10.

“connect everything” status is affirmed when Deleuze and Guattari announce that the rhizome

has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzeo*. The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance. The tree imposes the verb “to be”, but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, “and... and... and...”.⁵⁶

The movement that is “always between”, that is “and... and... and...”, presents the rhizome as a general notion of connection, without any suggestion of a process that corresponds to the actions of endoconsistency and exoconsistency, i.e. a process whereby a concept is made of other concepts internally, while also reaching out to other concepts externally. As such, there is nothing that can be drawn from Deleuze and Guattari’s account of the rhizome that could inform the specific terms with which they articulate their theory of the concept in *What is Philosophy?*

One aside to observe is that the rhizome is wholly at odds with Ricoeur’s thinking on conceptual connectivity. The tree represents the traditional structure of philosophical thinking, as Deleuze and Guattari present it, wherein individuals are attached to a central concept like branches to a trunk. In this regard, it is, as they state, a form of filiation, a means of identifying one object with another or making one object belong to or descend from another, thereby “imposing” statements that assign a predicate to a subject, i.e. “*A is B*”. The “and... and... and...” of rhizomic conjunction is set against this in order, ultimately, to encourage modes of thinking that produce multiple “determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions”, called “multiplicities”, in opposition to the singular definitions and accounts promoted by tree-like thinking. So filiation and alliance are antagonistic opposites for Deleuze and Guattari. However, for Ricoeur, they are the mutually defining properties of speculative reference and metaphorical extension, with the specialization that

⁵⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 25; original emphasis.

comes with reference providing the many cognitive interactions that drive a metaphor's capacity to create a novel perspective on a subject. This means Ricoeur can explain what happens when a metaphor is created, and provide a picture of a world where sense and reference are fused together with established referents helping to generate new meanings, and established meanings help to determine new referents. In contrast, with the rhizome, it is not clear what connection involves, other than elements coming together in ways that are different from linear, conceptual ordering. The effect of the conjunction is also not apparent: each new connection seems only to add another "and" to the list, but do nothing in the direction of making a conceptual or cognitive difference.

Conclusion

Ricoeur and Deleuze and Guattari provide two different theories of the concept acting not just through its capacity to bind together, but also through its capacity to connect with other concepts. However, the concepts will be "neighbouring" or "bridged" with Deleuze and Guattari, and "remote" or "unrelated" with Ricoeur.⁵⁷ Because the relation between art and philosophy is integral to their theories, they also present two different pictures of the art–philosophy relation. Ricoeur's theory *shows* conceptual connectivity, whereas Deleuze and Guattari's merely *says* it. The "showing" for Ricoeur arises through his account being structured by a relation of mutual dependence. The result is a model of the concept that I have named the "octopus". The capacity to be a concept, to apply to the things it does in a familiar, referential, concentrated way, *is conditional upon its capacity to be stretched and extended onto other things*. This is the basis of Ricoeur's

⁵⁷ While "neighbouring" and "bridged" are quotations from Deleuze and Guattari (from *What is Philosophy?*, 19–20), "remote" and "unrelated" are not phrases used by Ricoeur. Instead, they are my characterization of Ricoeur's claim that "speculative discourse has its *condition of possibility* in the semantic dynamism of metaphorical utterance", *Rule of Metaphor*, 296.

theory of metaphor and his picture of the relation between art and philosophy: the intersection of speculative, claim-making discourse that “expresses the systematic nature of the conceptual”, and metaphorical discourse that applies one concept to another in a new, unexpected way. The result is an ontology in which metaphor is a “continuing Odyssey” “determining more rigorously the conceptual traits of reality” while at the same time “making [new] referents appear”.⁵⁸

For Deleuze and Guattari, the concept is also a principle of connection on account of its including elements that are “inseparable”, its endoconsistency, as well as elements that have been reached “through the construction of a bridge” with another concept, its exoconsistency. However, whereas the contrast for Ricoeur is in terms of “near” and “far”, with each side always ready to be propelled towards its opposite, i.e. from near to far, the two sides of Deleuze and Guattari’s concept are characterized merely as internal zones made up of “inseparable components”, and “external” zones, with the manner of their connection explained by ascribing to the external zones the role of “joints” that can act as “bridges” between the zones. Furthermore, just as the mutual dependence of speculative reference and metaphorical sense creates a similar tensile relation between art and philosophy for Ricoeur, there is a lack of connection between art and philosophy for Deleuze and Guattari, as if to match the lack of tension between a concept’s endoconsistency and exoconsistency. The concept is the province of philosophy for Deleuze and Guattari, but it is only able to engage with art if the affective power of art is turned into a concept through the insight of a philosopher.

Arguably the greatest difference between Ricoeur and Deleuze and Guattari is over their understanding of reference. With Ricoeur, reference to objects is part of the process whereby a word is put to use in a variety of settings and contexts so that, as a result, it acquires a richness of sense that makes it ripe for connecting with an altogether new and unfamiliar context. However, for Deleuze and Guattari, reference is the application of words to objects conducted

⁵⁸ Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 298.

with the sole interest of determining whether or not the resultant proposition is true or false. While this view might accurately reflect a positivist attitude to the formation and meaning of propositions, it fails to acknowledge the wider variety of uses that reference performs in everyday discourse. It is possibly another symptom of the territorialism that informs Deleuze and Guattari's writing. It is as if they work on the understanding that in order to construct an ontology of "intersection and intertwinement", there must first be a terminological framework in which elements are confined to narrow roles, so that they can be shown to intersect and intertwine across those roles. Except Deleuze and Guattari do not show them to be intersecting and intertwining. They *state* that they connect, but they do not *show* that they do. This is because "showing" requires elements already at work in the process under discussion to be agents in the process. It is in this respect that I think Ricoeur provides the stronger account of the connectivity of concepts: reference is part of the octopus-like structure of the concept, preparing it for the moment when it will suddenly shoot out across numerous fields of meaning to create an insight in a remote and unrelated territory.

The idea that the nature of concepts is such that they connect with other concepts is important because it could have implications for the way identity – interpreted as the possession of certain properties as concepts – and predication – the ascription of a predicate-concept to a subject-concept – are understood. If concepts are no longer regarded as containers holding a set of uniform associations or meanings, but as elements that are reaching out to other concepts, then any operation that involves concepts, from predication (if concepts are understood in a linguistic or propositional sense) to experience (if concepts are understood in Kantian terms as shapers of experience), will become an operation in which the relationship to otherness is paramount. While this is one of the declared aims of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy – "not to predict, but to remain attentive to the unknown knocking at the door"⁵⁹ – there is the

⁵⁹ The quotation from Deleuze is made by Rajchman in *The Deleuze Connections*, 7, and attributed to Deleuze's essay on Michel Foucault, "What is a *dispositif*?", 165.

question of how otherness is welcomed into one's system of thought. Does it simply become one more item in a chain of connected othernesses, only to be held in awareness until the next "and" comes along? Or might there be the recognition that every specialized or precise or attentive concept that we possess holds within it the potential to reach out to the alien and the remote and to discover new meaning in that domain?

If the nature of concepts is such that their specialized reference in one area gives them the density of meaning that allows them to become an array of other, remote, seemingly unrelated concepts, then this would seem to place the generation of novelty, surprise and, perhaps most importantly at all, *significant* surprise – on the understanding that new metaphors offer significance, as opposed to random or indifferent meanings – at the centre of thought. One could argue that such creative connection-forming is already associated with the arts, but less so with the construction of knowledge and the description of everyday affairs, where fidelity to what is proper and accurate is prized over novelty and surprise. But if attitudes to concepts could be changed in order to acknowledge their tentacled performance, then it is possible that there might be greater acceptance of change, difference, and things being other than they seem in human affairs and in the world, where "change, difference, and things being other than they seem" are taken to be positive attributes in opposition to the desire for uniformity and homogeneity that can drive domination and exclusion. This would be to realize Ricoeur's odyssey of sense and reference as an attitude to thought that is permanently open to terminological precision in one area of discourse being the catalyst for the emergence of new, unforeseen concepts in another area.

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