

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Virtual ecology and the question of value

Brian Massumi

All compasses—economic, social, political, moral, traditional—have gone off the tracks, one after the other. It has become imperative to reforge axes of value, the fundamental finalities of human relations and productive activity. The ecology of the virtual is thus just as urgent as the ecologies of the visible world.

—FÉLIX GUATTARI¹

Value resembles a dance, not a statue.

—RAYMOND RUYER²

The ecological urgency of a dance of value. It's hard to imagine such a thing in the framework of our received notions of value. As designating "fundamental finalities," values are most often presented as carved in stone. The most widespread phrases in which the word currently occurs in the West today are cases in point: "family values" and "democratic values." Both, in different ways, equate values with inalterable norms vouchsafed by a transcendent power, God in the first case, the State in the second. Both posit these norms as universal and absolute. On the other hand, as orienting "productive activity" value takes on two predominant figures, both integral to capitalism: use-value and exchange-value. Use-value subordinates value to function, making utility the arbiter of value. Thus mapped to an external criterion, value is deprived of coordinates of its own, and is emptied of any intrinsic power to determine the norm. Exchange-value empties value in a different way: by quantifying it. Value is subordinated to

a general equivalent: money as universal standard of measure enabling all things, however singular, to be compared. Mapped onto a general equivalent, value glosses over the singularity of what it measures. Both use-value and exchange-value are more moving than a statue. This is due to the fact that they are hinged to another order—capitalism—with its own operative logic and line of variation. For example, what counts as “useful” changes as capitalism motors on. And the use-value of exchange-value is to oil the gears of perpetual circulation, concurrent with a constant fluctuation of prices. Move they may. But do they dance?

It is evident that when Guattari speaks of the imperative to reforge the axes of value, he has none of these dominant connotations of the word in mind. To understand what his revalued “ecology of the virtual” might be, the very concept of value will have to be reformed, beyond the normal compass. For Guattari, this means outside the framework of capitalism, but without returning to the appeal to a transcendent realm of absolutes. Value would then no longer equate with the norm or any manner of universal, and would not hinge on an external order to whose logic it is subordinated. It would re-ally itself with the singular: with what is such as it is, positively all of itself. It would re-ally with the singular, while somehow still providing a compass.

“That which is such as it is, positively all of itself.” The phrasing echoes C. S. Peirce’s definition of his category of Firstness, also known as Quality.³ What would a theory of value look like that held to the singular and dwelt in quality, rather than laying down the norm or ascending transcendent?

Abiding time

Colors dance across surfaces. At sunset, they dance in the air. The red dancing on the horizon is wholly and only *this* red, such as it is, just *thus*: pure positive character, resplendent in its own singularity. Raymond Ruyer, who along with Alfred North Whitehead is among the twentieth-century thinkers who place the theory of value most prominently at the center of their thinking, began his major treatise on value with an analysis of color, extrapolating from there to the axiological level proper.⁴ Whitehead, for his part, articulates his theory of value through his signature concept of qualities as “eternal objects.” For him as well, the explanatory touchstone is color. What follows will work between these two thinkers, also from a start in color, moving in the Guattarian direction of a virtual ecology of values as orientational qualities of existence.

Ruyer enumerates four points on which the theory of color and the theory of value overlap. Things get complicated from the very first.

The first point is that qualities “are subjected to no temporal ‘permanence.’”⁵ In making this point, Ruyer alludes to a passage in Whitehead

where he writes that “a color is eternal. It haunts time, like a spirit. It comes and it goes.”⁶ Colors do not exist so much as they “subsist” outside of time, Ruyer observes. “For an indeterminate period red can go unperceived by any one.”⁷ But then it will return. Where was it in the meantime? In *potentiality*, Whitehead will answer.⁸ When red is not being perceived, it isn’t simply absent, and it isn’t in some other world. Neither has it merely withdrawn, as object-oriented ontology would have it. “It neither survives, nor does it live.”⁹ It subsists, not surviving. Unliving, it “abides.”¹⁰ Its not being perceived is its abiding power to come again to paint the world in vivid hues. “It appears when it is wanted,” to revivify the world.¹¹ A quality of experience is a positive power of *appearing* that bides time outside experience, poised for its own return, over any length of time and across any distance in space. The fact that it only appears when it is wanted in no way detracts from its status as a positive power. “Where it comes, it is the same color.”¹² No wanting as attached to a particular experience has this abiding power. Occasions of experience do not abide, they become, and what becomes no sooner “perishes.”¹³

This explanation itself raises a number of problems. A first question concerns the apparent contradiction between the revivifying dance of color as it appears in a sunset and Whitehead’s statement that where red comes, it is the same color. Doesn’t a quality of experience “dance” precisely because it is continually changing, painting the dusk with the nuances of its own spellbinding transformation? And doesn’t every instance of red carry some defining peculiarity, owing to some circumstantial detail, an accident of illumination, for example, expressing itself in an errant shimmer, that makes it different from all other rednesses? Isn’t every *this* red singular: only thus, such as it is? Wouldn’t sameness across appearance be not only unliving, but downright deadening?

In order to reconcile this question it is necessary to rethink what we mean by the “same.” A potential, which is what a color is outside any particular instance of it, is poised to be *any* instance of it. It is ever on the verge of coming again, in any number of instances. It is this poising for “anyness” that abides. The potential for red is ever-poised to give itself over to variation, as many times and wherever it is wanted, in an ongoing series of appearances that is inexhaustible. The “same” potential, in its abiding outside the time of any particular appearance of it, must be conceived as already tending toward different variations on its own theme. The potential always and already includes in itself the infinite variety of its own appearings. In any given occasion of experience, a set of these variations will successively appear, in time. For the circumstances in which it appears are constantly shifting. The conditions under which red appears in the sunset sky cannot stand still. This compulsive restlessness applies to all circumstances in which color appears (in which any quality appears), in different forms and to varying degrees. Sunset red runs through a series of variations on itself, within the limits of the sky’s wanting it. The “any” of

the potential is realized in the *some* of this limited series of rednesses. In other words, the potential mutually includes infinite variety on an indefinite spectrum. The sky's wanting red realizes a certain limited arc selectively cut from the whole cloth of the color. That "same" full spectrum is given to the circumstances for selective expression. The same of a potential is singularly multiple, in the anyness of its abiding as in the someness of its appearing.

Given to decision

The relation between the singular-multiplicity of the abiding potential and singular-multiplicity of its actual appearing is the relation between "any" and "some."¹⁴ In other words, it is a relation of selective determination. The circumstances want what they want (red), and it is they that decide which red(s). The potential *gives* "what" might come: the character or qualitative variety that will exhibit itself. The circumstances *decide* "which" of the "what" does come: they take hold of a limited set of variations on the potential's abiding power to appear. The relation of "any" to "some"—of potential to realization (in Whitehead and Ruyer's vocabulary) or of the virtual to the actual (in Deleuze's vocabulary)—is that of givenness to decision. This can also be stated as the relation between an abiding of variety, whatly indifferent to which it will be ("impassive," Deleuze says¹⁵), and an appetitive taking-hold of a wanted variation ("prehension" in Whitehead's vocabulary). Or again: between a select narrowness of realized experience, and the breadth of potential experience.

The lesson is that every singularity, as in potential and as actualized, is constitutively multiple.¹⁶ This has far-reaching philosophical implications. The readymade category that seems most suited to potential is one that was shunted aside in the inaugural gesture of this chapter: that of the "universal." The problem with the concept of the universal is that in its most widespread usages it employs an unvarying notion of the same, mapping to the "general" side of the "general-particular polarity. Both sides of that polarity connote singleness (being one), if on different levels and in different ways. They both understand "this" to mean "not those": single as opposed to multiplicitous. In Ruyer, Whitehead, and Deleuze / Guattari's accounts, there is no determination that does not involve a multiplicity. "Any" to "some" is not reducible to the opposition between "this one" versus "those." Qualitative thisness necessarily involves a spectrum. Qualities keep company, potentially and decisively. It is always a question of *mutual inclusion*. The issue is its width: what arc of the spectrum is wanted? The "universal-particular" couplet only makes sense within a logic privileging a notion of substance, and considering the relations between substantial entities to be governed by the principle of the excluded middle. In other words, it privileges a *privative* logic (mutual exclusivity). The

qualitative, as opposed to substantialist, logic of potential and its realization is fundamentally *convivial* (appetitively so). It is all about degrees of mutual inclusion. The unsuitability of the universal-particular distinction has important political implications for the theory of value when it comes to the properly axiological level: a shift occurs in the logic of the qualitative from *difference* as a privative relation between mutually exclusive samenesses (general identities or particular cases) to a spectrum of *differentiation* involving a conviviality of appetition.¹⁷

Excess of character

Ruyer's second point about color and value concerns a notion that has quietly slipped into this discussion along the way: the circumstances. According to Ruyer, the circumstances of an actualization, the conditions calling for a potential's appearing, are not sufficient to explain the quality that appears.¹⁸ You can describe what conditions are necessary for the appearance of red until you're blue in the face, and you will still not be able to convey to a color-blind person what red is, such as it is, in contradistinction to orange, yellow, and green. The bodily conditions of a color-blind person's vision do not "want" any red. They "some" the color spectrum otherwise. Red's power of appearing abides them. Colors are akin to pornography: you only know one when you see it. Qualities of experience are *subjective*, but not in the sense of belonging only to a subject or occurring in a mind. They are subjective in the sense that they have a *character*. They *are* their character. There is nothing to explain about "what" they are other than that character, such as it is. Their appearance tells all. There is nothing "behind" the qualitative character exhibited in their appearance that would explain what they are any better than the appearing of the character explains itself. In fact, explanations of what lies behind the appearance are more apt to lose the quality than present it better. A complete account of the physical and physiological conditions behind the appearance of red includes many things—red excluded. This is for the simple reason, as Whitehead observes, stating the obvious, that the wavelengths of light around which the physical side of the explanation centers have no color in and of themselves.¹⁹ The same could be said of the physiological side of the equation: electrical nerve impulses are no more colorful than photon streams. This last point is crucial, because it extends the argument to all qualities of experience. Every quality of experience self-explanatorily *exceeds its empirical conditions*. This means that a scientific explanation, although true as far as it goes, does not fully account for the occasion. An empirical explanation is a reductive abstraction that focuses on only certain of the elements involved (those capable of being quantified with the regularity of a law). Empirical explanation selects for

how the occasion is quantitatively. The “how” of empirical explanation is a selective focus on a lawfully select “some” of the factors involved, arrived at precisely by subtracting the defining character of the occasion from it: the scientific explanation of the red of the sunset begins by bracketing redness, the qualitateness of red. It takes red’s qualitative nature for self-explanatory—which it is. But what it forgets is Whitehead’s fundamental point that the occasion as explained by that defining character is *more concrete* than the scientific fact extracted (abstracted) from it.²⁰ Who would even think of explaining red scientifically if they had never seen it? The empirical explanation “hows” itself into an acquired color-blindness. When it sees red, it just sees red, such as it is—and proceeds to explain *away* that experiential fact with an abstractive explanation of how it came to be. The implications of this for neuropsychology, and its humanities cousins like neuroaesthetics, are grave. Also grave are the consequences for historical analysis, to the extent that it fashions itself an empirical enterprise, for example employing a linear cause–effect framework for “how” things came about modeled directly or indirectly on scientific notions of causality. History has to acknowledge that subjective and the qualitative are always wanting, and that the concrete facts of history exhibit a qualitative form of self-explanation. Any explanation bracketing this qualitative reality is deadeningly incomplete, because to explain away the qualitative factors of experience is to explain away potential.

The fact that a quality of experience appears under certain requisite conditions in no way detracts from its being such as it, positively all of its subjective itself. The myriad circumstantial factors of an occasion come together in such as way as to call to, and call forth, a defining qualitative character. But they do not *make* the quality. When red appears here, it will always already have appeared elsewhere, at another moment of time, and will no doubt appear elsewhere in another place. In its abiding power of appearing, red is ubiquitously unmade. It is always-already (in potential). It does not *emerge* from its conditions. It *appears* for them, when called. It fills their want with its self-explaining. In fact, its self-explaining is in a sense more concretely explanatory of the circumstances than they are of it: the red of the sunset makes apparent what this occasion is all about. The character red *characterizes* the complete occasion.

Now for the first time (always having been)

Whitehead insists on the idea that eternal objects, qualities, do not emerge.²¹ To say that they emerge would be to say that something has been created *ex nihilo*. Color would then have come from an absence of color. In the fullness of the complete fact, color has not come out of nowhere. It has come out of its own abiding. It has come out of potential. It is odd

to say so, but theories of qualitative emergence (such as most theories of consciousness as arising from material interactions) in fact write potential out of the equation. So doing, they self-destruct. Nothing comes of nothing. And without abiding potential, that's just what there is.

But surely, there was a time before rods and cones. Didn't color emerge with the evolution of the retina? Weren't certain periods in the history of art characterized by the abrupt appearance of a new quality of color, such as the ultramarine so beautifully characterizing medieval painting?²² Where was ultramarine before the secret of purifying it from lapis lazuli was discovered? To say that it was abiding is getting a little old at this point. More to the point, the appearance of a quality *carries its own time signature*. It instantiates its own time of potential. If potential is outside time, its abiding cannot be thought of as waiting around in the wings for the cue to enter the stage. To say that a quality carries its own time means that when it appears for the first time, as Guattari suggests, it appears abruptly "*in the mode of always having been*."²³ The "eternity" of the eternal object is not a waiting off-stage in the wings of time. It is for this reason that Whitehead dubs it an "*eternality*"²⁴—a quality of eternity—that comes with character. The eternality of a color "subsists" here and now. *Now, for the first time, as always having been*: this is the temporal mode of appearance of a qualitative character. This singular time signature arrives on the wings of the appearance (rather than the appearance waiting on the wings of time).

This means that a quality is nothing outside its actual expressions, even though it cannot be contained in any one occasion in which it occurs, or even in their sum total. Whitehead's way of saying this is that everything real exhibits itself somewhere, sometime (and really subsists, for elsewhere and elsewhen). This is in fact his definition of "real."²⁵ This ties the definition of the real to an unabsorbable *excess* of what appears. For the theory of value this is key. In the experience of a value, a *moreness* of the world appears, as always having been, heralding as yet undetermined elsewheres and elsewhens. A more of potential appears, selectively enveloped in a defining qualitative character. The defining character is experienced as the *affective tonality* of the occasion: the "color" of the occasion as a whole.²⁶ Every qualitative experience is an experience of the world's moreness, a lively sense of potential that is immanent to the situation's singularity even as it exceeds it. This immanent self-exceeding of the situation is experienced as a sense of vivacity over and above the determinate character of the affective tonality enveloping it: as a *vitality affect* carrying and carried by the affective tonality.²⁷

The immanent beyond

The importance of this for the theory of value is that it does away with transcendence in any normal sense of the word. Every experience is *immanently self-transcending*—to the exact extent to which it is lived qualitatively. Transcendence is done away with—but not the lure of a moreness to life that makes the idea of transcendence compelling. Paradoxically, what ultimately completes the concrete fact of an occasion's occurrence is the promissory note of incompleteness it envelops, in excess over its determinate character. That excess packs the occasion with potential for other occasions to avail themselves of. It stuffs it with immanent multiplicity. It is promissory in the sense that it betokens here and now vivacities of qualities to come. Every appearance of a quality is vivifying of the situation in which it appears, in direct proportion to the promise it carries for the vivification of others. Every quality is such as it is, excessively. It is positively all itself in the manner in which it vividly carries, immanent to itself, its own beyond.²⁸ More or less vividly: the vivacity a situation carries in virtue of its defining character will be proportionate to the intensity of its vitality affect. In passing, it is worth noting that this requires a non-quantitative theory of intensive magnitude as a necessary concomitant to a theory of value.²⁹

The formula for the time of the qualitative, “now for the first time, as always having been,” enables a necessary articulation: between the making of circumstances and the unmade of the qualities of experience that characterize them. The becoming of an occasion of experience covers a span. It proceeds through phases, and comes to a climax. It has a duration. The occasion's triggering into duration requires a coming-together of circumstances. The coming to a conclusion of the arc of this becoming requires something more: an activation. It requires a syncretic, synthetic working-together of diverse contributory factors. This must in fact be a self-activation, for the principle of syncretic synthesis must arise from within the occasion's stirring toward its own conclusion. The conclusion, Whitehead says, is felt before it is arrived at. It is felt as a “lure.”³⁰ The lure is precisely the qualitative character that will crown the occasion's becoming, coming to definitively characterize it. The feeling of the lure energizes the occasion, pulling it forward through its own self-synthesis. It provides it a direction: a compass. It vectorizes the occasion toward its own achievement. The qualitative lure stands in the occasion's becoming for its own outside. It is and remains effectively *virtual*. For the achievement of the becoming's completing characterization is the precise moment of its perishing. It has exhausted itself in its own decisive achievement. Its activity recedes, as its becoming cedes to what the now-altered circumstances may want next. The quality stands in the occasion for a self-achieving, one with its exceeding. The quality's role is that of the lure of the virtual beyond, immanent to the occasion's coming to pass.

The lure of subjectivity

In describing this cooperation of the actual circumstances and the virtual lure of complete characterization, a decidedly subjective vocabulary has settled in. What is being described is the occasion's appetite (for itself): its "wanting" quality of experience. The occasion, Whitehead says, begins "objectively": from a basis in a coming-together of disparate circumstances that have been bequeathed to the occasion by the passing of others before it. But these given circumstances are not enough. Nothing would click without the energizing of a synthetic working-together-toward-a-conclusion. It is the quality, operating as a virtual lure, or as an eternal "object," that "gives" the potential for this arcing of the occasion in the direction of its completion. The donation of potential activates the occasion's appetitive self-activity toward an end. The lure of the potential subjectifies the occasion. The occasion snaps into its own vivacity. It *decides*, from the infinity of potentials, which virtual terminus it will take as its compass. It *cuts* into the spectrum of potential, and orients itself by the selective beacon of that virtual light.³¹ The sunset cuts for red. Its self-synthesizing "decision" to be finally characterized by red bears witness to a degree of subjectivity—operative even on a level with the movements of matter (which henceforth can no longer be qualified as "dumb" and lifeless).³²

Braided causality

This matters for the theory of value because it requires a very different account of causality. The usual conception posits a linear progression from cause to effect on the same level of functioning (that of mechanistic action-reaction). Here, on the contrary, there are two lines of causality operating on different levels, criss-crossing in the middle of becoming. One is actual (including but not limited to mechanism), the other virtual (really, luringly, effectively so). One pushes the occasion from behind with the force of inherited circumstance demanding conformity to given objective conditions; the other calls from ahead, pulling the occasion toward the future it will have been when it has done its all. The theory of color models causation for the theory of value as a *braided causality*.³³ Objective and subjective factors, actuality in motion and impassive virtuality, braid into the directional unfolding of the occasion toward a conclusion. The braiding is nothing like a mechanical part-to-part connection. It is a co-operation, across the differential between the objective and the subjective, and the actual and the virtual, that brings the occasion to life, by catalyzing a *transfer* of character. The objectivity of the circumstances becomes subjectively self-deciding, under the attractive force of the quality of experience. The occasion's self-deciding takes upon itself the characterization donated

by the “eternal object” operating as virtual lure.³⁴ The causality in play is more than mechanical: it is *transductive* (transferrential in this processual sense, not at all in the psychological sense).³⁵

In the braided causality conditioning the transduction, it is ultimately impossible to assign an unambiguous status of activity or passivity to the factors involved. The circumstances come to the occasion passively, as a heap of leftovers from past becomings. But they activate, acquiring an appetite for qualitative completion.³⁶ The virtual terminus that awakens that wanting and orients its unfolding “acts” virtually, with the impassivity of a lure. Whitehead is careful to retain this productive indecision between activity and passivity. The given circumstances, he says, are “patient” for the quality with which they actively seek to complete themselves.³⁷ The qualitative lure “energizes” the occasion’s self-forming duration, as an exercise of its power to bide time and abide as potential. The word “conditioning” is a handy way of nominating the braided causality of the transductive process, avoiding the usual linearizing connotations of the word “causality.”

Given and constructed

The transduction happens in a braided zone of indiscernibility between activity and passivity. This “indecision” between activity and passivity is a positive resource for the theory of value. It makes it possible to say both that the occasion makes itself, and that it is made. For example, the circumstances of medieval life provided the objective conditions for the appearance of ultramarine. These circumstances were seized upon, and synthesizing procedures invented for its manufacture. But it was not this blue *per se* that was fabricated. What was fabricated were the transductive conditions ripe for ultramarine to express its power of appearing. In other words, what were fabricated were the conditions for ultramarine to donate itself as a quality, such as it, all and positively as it is. What medieval industry invented was the singular coming-together of circumstances and working-together of factors requisite for just this blue to give of its potential. Medieval industry invented its historical *patience* for ultramarine. Thus ultramarine can be considered to have been *both given and invented*: constructed as an “eternal” factor of nature. Qualities of experience are *made* to exercise their sovereign *power* to appear in the mode of always having been. What “emerges,” according to Whitehead, are the comings-together and workings-together patient for that self-appearance. The arrived-at qualities do not emerge. They just “appear,” of their own power.³⁸ They make their appearance when the wanting is ripe for them. An occasion of experience is at once a recipient (of the objective conditions), a patient (of potential), and an agent (the subject of its own

synthesis).³⁹ None of this is in any way contradictory. Recipient, patient, and agent are roles: *modes of activity*, in an extended sense unsubordinated to the active / passive dichotomy (“activity” in this sense is different from “action”). Modes of activity need not observe the law of the excluded middle. They may relay, overlap, interplay, and reciprocally inflect. They co-occur.

Activist philosophy

Ruyer’s theory of value insists that the cornerstone concept for axiology is *activity*.⁴⁰ Axiology is activist philosophy. This frees the theory of value from the statuesque imperative of prescription overshadowing occasions of experience from the pedestal of a lofty “ought”: an end, an aim, carved in stone. In the theory of value as understood here, *there is no ought*. There is appetite, energized, aiming at the virtual terminus of its own self-completion. The aim might be off. The arrow of becoming might miss its mark. Circumstances intervening en route may deflect the becoming toward another defining quality.⁴¹ More radically, the occasion may “decide” on the fly to self-deflect toward a different terminus. It may cut off on a different track. It may *invent its own lure*. It may *improvise* on its wanting, developing an emerging appetite for a different conclusion. It may self-recondition. In this theory of value, there is no ought—only potential and invention. Potential and invention, objectively conditioned and subjectively reconditioned. The difference between a quality like a color and a value proper, according to Ruyer, is precisely this: value comes into itself axiologically when activity turns “self-transforming.”⁴² This way of conceiving of value allies axiology to the invention of the *new*. It forcibly uproots it from its anchoring in the imperatives of tradition.

Force and value

Forcibly: the term is not gratuitous. “*Between force and value*,” Ruyer writes, “*there is an identity of nature*.”⁴³ He is using force in a sense beyond its mechanistic meaning, in a way consonant with the braided causality just described. “A phenomenon of force,” he continues, “is both a fact and *more-than-fact*, a given and *more-than-given*, for force directs itself, beyond its present existence, toward a state it itself will produce.”⁴⁴ Force is not a matter of the adequation of cause to effect, as mechanism would have it. More fundamentally, it is a question of what Erin Manning terms the *more-than*.⁴⁵ Force pertains to the braided causality of patience, crossed with terminal allure, cutting across an occasion’s energizing, given over to the aim at self-completion, in a direction of selection.

Ecology of values

The inescapability of the concept of force for the theory of value points to the impossibility of insulating an axiological domain from the political. What the concept of force itself “wants” is a correlative concept of power. Value does not inhabit some pure moral domain. It is active in the world, alive with appetite and self-transformation. The political question necessarily intervenes on the ethical level of how the appetitions running toward self-fulfilment cohabit their shared circumstances—how they jostle and readjust to each other, or battle and elbow each other out; how they mutually intensify each other’s run, or curtail one another’s force of self-deciding. It is here that the *ecology* of values poses itself as a problem. That ecology is an ecology *of the virtual* in light of the energizing and orienting contribution of potential by qualities of experience in their conditioning role as character-building virtual aim attractors. The question raised earlier of the distinction between difference and differentiation finds its full force here. The politics implied by this theorization of value will give axiological priority to the more-than-given, the more-than-fact, beyond recognized constituencies and the fact of their belonging to given identity categories. It gives priority instead to their belonging to an ecology that forcefully, formatively hinges on the virtual.

Norm and value

Ruyer’s third point about how the theory of color proper prepares the foundation for the theory of value is germane to this ecological question. It states that a quality of experience like a color is “at once *subjective and transsubjective, relative and transrelative*.”⁴⁶ Ruyer himself glosses this phrase in a more traditional way than will be the case here (“subjective” in the sense of being in a subject, transrelative in the sense of obeying a “strict normativity”⁴⁷). The erasure of the ought from axiology does not erase normativity. But it does change the role of the norm, in a way signaled by Simondon.

For Simondon, the norm is not a model of behavior demanding obedience. It is neither a law of behavior, nor the regulative ideal of an identity. It is a rule of operation maintaining activity within certain parameters. When the becoming of one occasion of experience (or in Simondon’s vocabulary, “individuation”) perishes and another comes in its wake, the following occasion can seize the bequeathed conditions in a way that wants to follow in the footsteps of its antecedent. This occurs when there are germinal forms left by the antecedent occasion among the detritus of its passing, which then resprout as the new occasion self-energizes, and are selected by it to be determining of its course. Whitehead calls these

germinal forms “common elements of form.”⁴⁸ The successor occasion subsequently unfolds in a way that makes its becoming analogous to that of its predecessor. Stated in a way that takes into consideration the undecidability between action and passivity, this analogized resprouting can be called “conformal becoming” or “transmitted self-rule.” It constitutes what Whitehead calls a “serial order”⁴⁹ or “historic route.”⁵⁰ Under these conditions, the occasions along the route remain within average modes of operation, reproducing certain shared values more than they invent new ones for themselves. In other words, they are homeostatic. What they collectively want is to calibrate their becoming for equilibrium, and to pass the equilibrium-seeking down the line. The operational parameters favoring this are *norms*. By this definition, norms function *immanently* to every occasion, sprouting anew in each subsequent becoming. They “rule” from within occasions’ self-deciding. They are achievements, of sorts. Limitative achievements, it is true, but achievements nonetheless. As immanent to occasions’ becoming, they retain a certain newness. The occasions are serially enlivened by repeated appearance of their shared defining character. They each “enjoy,” as Whitehead would say, its serial return.

A value, in contradistinction to a norm, is in Simondon’s words “the capacity for amplifying transfer contained in the system of norms.”⁵¹ In other words, the norm itself becomes a given circumstance for an intervening transduction that amplifies the becoming. By “amplification” Simondon means seizing upon factors also present in the given circumstances over and beyond the conformal germs regulating the norm. These factors are made to count as formative factors for the becoming. Their magnifying rise into importance shifts the appetitive focus. They bring into focus alternate orientations, shepherded to completion in different qualities of experience than those “normally” decided for. This “magnifies” the occasion in another sense. It packs its becoming fuller with virtual lures. It intensifies its wanting with alternate routes to alternate ends. This is the nonquantitative sense of intensive magnitude the theory of value requires. Greater qualitative intensity is packed into an occasion’s becoming in the form of *contrasts* between alternatives held together, in their difference, in the occasion’s unfolding.

Struggle and invention

This means that there is an ecology of value implicated in each occasion’s self-decision: a virtual cohabitation that disturbs the equilibrium, necessitating struggle or invention. Or *both* struggle—the jostling and mutual readjustment of wanted qualities of experience or perhaps, that failing, a battling it out—and invention. Here, invention is the appearance of a new finality, an eternal object appearing for the first time: an alluring virtual

terminus never before felt, for all time. The occasion's completion will carry the birthmark of the ecological struggle of its reaching its end. In the end, it will appear as a complex quality of experience *patterned* by the contributing contrasts.⁵² Value proper concerns the amplifying appearance of patterned intensity, predicated on inherited norms but inventively exceeding their conformal rule, with an "abnormal" avidity of appetition, energized in a way that leads far from equilibrium.⁵³

Transsubjective

The process of valuation, Ruyer was quoted as saying, is both subjective and transsubjective, relative and transrelative. In the terms of the present account, actual occasions of existence are subjective in the sense explained earlier: self-deciding in their transductive patience for quality of experience, and achieving their own singular character. Subjectively, they are self-completing. They come to a peak, where their defining quality (contrastive complex of qualities) appears, no sooner to perish. It is only they that partake of their peaking and perishing. They are alone in their own self-enjoyment. This is the *atomistic* aspect of the process of valuation that Whitehead notes.⁵⁴ The atomistic completion of the occasion envelops all of its contributory factors, all of its self-deciding, in the singular (multiple) appearing of the crowning quality of experience, such as it has come to be, positively all itself. The singularity of the completing quality that finally characterizes the occasion abstractly wraps everything that prepared its appearance into its crystalline being-such-as-it-is, all and only that, now for all times. It is this atomic singularity, virtually shimmering with fissional and fusional potential that can only come to full expression in other, successor, occasions, that gives the occasion its *monadic* character. An occasion of experience is not merely atomistic. It is monadically so, *including its own others* in its being such as only it will have become. In this other-including monadic aspect, the occasion is what I have elsewhere called, riffing on William James, a "little absolute" (so immanently different from the grand absolute of the universal and transcendent).⁵⁵ There is a necessary aspect of transsubjectivity in-forming subjective becoming.

Transrelative

Whitehead's way of talking about a monadic occasion's virtual inclusion of its own others in its singularity, or what was called earlier its immanent self-transcendence, is that it includes its own "beyond" in its constitution. "It belongs to the essence of each occasion of experience that it is concerned with an otherness transcending itself."⁵⁶ What this means is that the "little

absolute” of every occasion is not absolute in a static or statuesque sense. It is virtually stirring with the potential for *other* occasions, *other* appetites, *other* patterns, *other* intensities, *other* ecological struggles and adjustments. In other words, its monadic aspect contains an *other* aspect. The occasion is crystalline in its singularity—but its facets are turned toward alterity. Guattari makes the equation: MONADISM = TRANSMONADISM.⁵⁷ The “little absolute” of the occasion is transrelative. It is impassively ashimmer with the potential nexts in the transductive series. It is to these next others that it bequeathes at its peak the intensive pattern it has invented. In its coming to completion, it has become now, for all times. Its intensity, its pattern, its invention, will be available as a given for ever more. It now always will have been a potential—even for past times where the wanting of its intensity spectrally stirred but did not peak in that alternative (now for the first time, in the mode of always having been, haunting time).⁵⁸ In this theory of value, the stolid “ought” of morality and normative ethics is trumped by the prospective *should* of the abiding promise. This is “should” as an auxiliary verb in the subjunctive mood (as in “should such a thing come to pass ...”). The difference is between beckoning enablement and prescription, promissory opening and correctness of closure. The “should” in this subjunctive sense designates the eternality of potential, for invention, beyond the norm. It marks the auxiliary abiding of the appetite for the amplified intensity of experience, luringly appearing now and again in new axiological achievements.

To sum up: The sense in which the occasion is “transsubjective” is that the potential that reappears along the transductive series may always be felt and taken up into the singularity of an other occasion. The potential will then re-peak, subjectively again, for that occasion. When the occasion singularly perishes, it will continue to haunt the transductive series like a spirit. An occasion, Whitehead says, is “immortal” in this sense.⁵⁹ Its potential moves through the little-absolute subjectivity of others’ becomings. This toggles us back from the transmonadic aspect to the monadic. Paradoxically, in spite of their final status of little absolutes, it is with respect to their monadic aspect that occasions are “relative.” Their initial becoming-into-themselves is relative to the inherited conditions from which they emerge—and from which they free themselves to the extent that they self-decide for their own singular character. It is in this initial bid for *freedom* that they are relative.⁶⁰ Upon their self-completion, as they peak, they are transmonadically fully determined once (now) and for all (for a virtual infinity of others). They move from the relativity of their beginnings through their little-absolutely subjective becoming to the transrelativity of their bequeathing.

Surplus value

Excess. The immanent beyond enveloped in the qualitative just this, thus, positively all of itself of self-achieving experience has now entered the core of the theory of value. The shift from a theory of “pure” quality like a color to an axiological value proper was said to revolve around the concept of activity. The concept of activity was said to concern activity of self-completion virtually including its own others, to which it bequeathes a newly invented pattern of qualities of experience. Virtually haloing that complex pattern is a wider complex of qualities on which the occasion turned its back, selecting them not to appear. These unselected alternatives form the virtual background against which the achieved pattern stands out—and without which it would lack the experiential emphasis that enables it to assert its being just what it is. The backgrounded complex of alternatives can be distinguished from the qualitative complex that emphatically appears against its virtual background by calling it, borrowing from Guattari, the occasion’s *complexion*.⁶¹ The occasion of experience bequeathes to its successors this extended complex composed of the actual pattern and its virtual complexion. It is this extended nexus that is bequeathed to the world as a *proposition* for a next occasion’s bid for its own freedom.⁶²

The key point here is that an occasion always proposes for the world a *surplus* of patterned potential. A next occasion makes good on the surplus, selecting its own alternatives. It recomposes the pattern. It re-colors the halo. It invents new patterns in its bid for freedom. *Process* turns on this serial realization of *surplus value*. The theory of value does not just extend to surplus value. It is essentially concerned with it. There is no theory of value, in its properly axiological sense, without a theory of surplus value. This means that the theory of value can reach no final resting point. It must follow the process of the becoming of values. That process revolves around the perpetual turnover of excess potential. Each self-completing achievement absorbs excess and reimparts surplus. When this process runs in the direction of the intensification of experience, in the qualitative sense discussed above, it achieves what Whitehead calls *progress*, which is synonymous for him with *adventure*: the intensifying aim “toward things not yet realized”⁶³ passing down an historic route. This is a non-teleological notion of progress as process in continual turnover that invents its own ends—and perpetually exceeds them.

Revaluation

The red of the sunset is a “pure” quality, little-absolutely enjoying its own achievement, wanting nothing but this, thus as it is. This is red in its

monadic aspect, assimilable to Peirce's Firstness. But the same red is no longer a "pure" quality but a properly axiological value when it is taken up, for example, by an artistic experience that decides the red should return other-thus, in another this: as a pigment pattern on a canvas. The painting takes up the proposition of red differently, reinvents its achievement, and reimparts it haloed with a different complexion of alternatives (in this case, likely to be expressed by the ultimately untenable distinction between "natural" quality and "cultural" value). The entering of red into a transductive series of *reevaluation* corresponds to Peirce's Thirdness, or *relation*. This is the adventurous, transmonadic aspect. A crucial question now arises for the theory of value. The entire process is one of immediacy of experience becoming to self-enjoy the expression of its own intensity in the crowning achievement of the appearance of a completing quality of experience, complexly patterned and virtually complexioned. This means that relation is experienced as such, in all immediacy. In Peircean terms, there is a *Firstness of Thirdness*. This question of the direct experience of relation forbids the theory of value from straying into the ethereal realm of ideal universals (or into the abyss of withdrawn objects). It must remain faithful to effectively appearing singular multiplicities of experience. These are essentially subjective, but cannot be contained in *the* subject (the single, particular subject) owing to their transsubjective, transrelative participation in a transductive series, the whole, infinite spectrum of which is in some way felt in every completely determined, atomistic link in the braided chain. The theory of value must cleave to the experiential in this extended sense. In other words, it has a date with *radical empiricism* (defined by James as resting on the premise that relations are immediately real and really experienced).⁶⁴ The concepts of affective tonality and vitality affect introduced earlier provide useful takes on the immediate experiential reality of relation. But as Whitehead emphasizes, relation is already built into the concept of qualities of experience, for which he suggests the name "relational essences."⁶⁵

This radically removes the theory of value from the spheres of traditional moral philosophy and normative ethics, which revolve around the fulcrum of "the" subject and its choices. From the axiological perspective suggested here, this traditional subject-centeredness amounts to so massive a reduction of the relational complexity of the process as to constitute a falsification. The concept of choice is a pale shadow of the selective becoming of the axiological process as understood here. The complexly decisive bid for freedom at the processually selective heart of becoming begs for an integral rethinking of what we mean by freedom.

Capitalist surplus value

Moral philosophy and normative ethics are not the only nemeses of the theory of the value as inseparable from a philosophy of becoming. The capitalist process has put its trademark on surplus value. Capitalism's singular take on surplus value is more defining of capitalism than either use-value or exchange-value (which are not unique to it, and figure in other systems). Surplus value is different from profit. Profit is a realization of surplus value in a measurable quantity: an actually appearing economic value. Capitalist surplus value is defined in contradistinction to profit as the capacity to generate a future profit. Surplus value is the excess of economic value, over and beyond any given share of profit, that runs through the process. Surplus value is produced in the turnover of profit, used as investment capital toward greater profit. It is the *quality* of economic value under quantitative increase. It may seem odd to say it, but capitalist surplus value, like all surplus value, is fundamentally qualitative. It is the qualitative *intensity* of the quantitative process of accumulating capitalist value. Profit is the monadic aspect of capitalism. Surplus value is its transmonadic aspect: its other-addressed invention of economic potential. Surplus value is the virtual halo of profit. It is the processual complexion of the capitalist system. As virtual, it is actually immeasurable.⁶⁶ Although capitalist surplus value is qualitative, as is all processual excess, the transductive series it haunts is pinned to the atomistic realization of quantities of value. Seen from this angle, capitalism is a worldwide machinery for quantifying qualities of experience. No dimension of life escapes capitalism's appetite for converting qualitative surplus into an endless accumulation of quantified shares of value.

From the point of view of the theory of value developed here, capitalist surplus value is but a species of surplus value. It is not the model for surplus value, but an impoverished image of it. The theory of surplus value in the richest sense concerns the singular vivacity of a quality's appearing such as it is, just this, and the revivification this thus potentially bequeathes: it is a theory of *surplus value of life*. Capitalist surplus value is surplus value glutted to the point of qualitative starvation by its dependence on the continual reduction of quality to the accumulation of increasing quantity. Surplus value of life, for its part, refuses to starve its realizations with the wrong kind of excess. It subsists across the transductive series in order to insist on the immediately qualitative nature of each appearing valuation. Its process revolves around the directly qualitative intensification of experience: its increasing qualitative magnitude, as opposed to magnitudes of increasing quantity. Surplus value of life is in essential tension with capitalist surplus value. There is an implicit *anticapitalism* in the enriched theory of value. The playing out of this tension is the most crucial struggle involved in the self-decisions occasions of experience must make as they

bootstrap themselves into the bids for freedom that will potentially, provisionally, complete them.

The axiological anticapitalist struggle is the most crucial because the voraciously reductive process of accumulation associated with the turnover of capitalist surplus value has reached the point of endangering life itself. The actual ecologies Guattari refers to in the opening quotation have been brought to the point of collapse. There is an urgency to rethink the theory of value in a way that shifts the emphasis away from value production revolving on the quantification of value back to an essential concern for intensities of valuation that have (are) values in themselves: such as they are, positively all of themselves; such as they other potential onward for similarly intense, unabashedly qualitative, revaluations to come. A take on the virtual ecology is a necessary part of any response to the crisis of actual ecologies. For it alone is capable of haloing present realizations with anticapitalist potential.

Systematic anomaly

Fittingly, Ruyer's fourth and final point about how the theory of color overlaps with the theory of value concerns ecological complexity. He states it in terms of "system."⁶⁷ This is related to the point made earlier about the complexity of appearing and the complexion of the background of potential against which it appears. A color is a little absolute. Under one aspect, it presents its atomistic appearing such as it singularly is. But under its concomitant transrelative aspect, its appearing carries a systemicity. Red is red in virtual contrast to its complementary color, green. There is a system of colors. The contrast is everywhere active where red appears, even when it appears alone. Red's complementary values haunt it. If you stare at a monochrome red display and then turn your gaze away, the world turns green. If you focus on the shadow of a red object, it appears not grey but greenish. Where red appears, green subsists—poised to appear as the circumstances want. Green dances with red's circumstances. Red carries an ecological engagement with potential for greenness. Green is the most proximate other-value in the ecology of red. Red is always already virtual green.

This ecological systematicity of color is, oddly, considered invariant in traditional theories of experience. This is because its systematicity is indeed invariably passed down in the germinal forms in-forming the individuation of animal bodies (the genes). Or is it? It is not in fact entirely invariant—as any color-blind person will tell you. But as Ruyer off-handedly observes, people who are color-blind do not struggle with those who are not over redness⁶⁸ (they may struggle over inclusion and accommodation, but not over redness *per se*). When a value system is considered, however wrongly, to be

an invariant, the complementary contrasts missing from some realizations of the system are apt to be dismissed as a simple anomaly. In other words, this alternate realization is not treated as a value in itself. It is seen as a simple lack of the predominant value. It is only considered important if the variation interferes with the normative functions built into the human environment (for example, the effectiveness of signage). But surely, the lack of red is not just an anomalous absence. Surely, it has its own systematicity. It is not a simple lack, but the presence of an alternate system of color. Must not this alternate system carry intensities of experience that can be lived as values in themselves? Seen from this angle, color-blindness is a potential for adventure in its own right (as is autism, to take a culturally salient example for our time).

Domination and neurodiversity

In light of the earlier discussion of variety and variation, the theory of value owes it to itself to eschew invariants and counter their relegation of variations to the status of insignificant anomalies. It has to throw the staid conceptual baby of the invariant out with the normative bathwater. The social and political struggles of the last forty years have revolved around the affirmation of diversity. Variations of race, gender, ethnicity, and able-bodiedness have been at the political center of axiological struggle. Politically, the fundamental problem raised by the theory of value advanced here relates to the status of invariably dominated groups. When the dominating invariant is in operation, the singular variations associated with these groups tend to be construed as anomalies worthy at best of tolerance, or if they're lucky benevolent accommodation to the norms.⁶⁹ The invariant of invariants, the putative universal, the preeminent standard of existence, is, of course, the *human*. The examples of color-blindness and autism add the factor of *neurodiversity* to the political mix. In view of the preeminent role played by the imposed standard of the human, it can be argued that the issue of neurodiversity cuts across and exceeds such struggles as those around race, gender, ethnicity, and able-bodiedness, extending to all manner of variations in experiential complexion. As Erin Manning argues, this makes it a necessary strategic axis for a revaluated theory of value and its associated politics, arcing across the full experiential spectrum of potential.⁷⁰ There *should* be struggles over redness. There *should* be struggles over autistic perception in Manning's sense of the term.⁷¹

Ecological struggle

The point is that the theory of value, to live up to its potential adventurousness, must approach the ecological systemicity of every value,

however seemingly hardwired, as a question of virtual variety: ecologies of *systemic* contrast and complementarity. It should grasp these diversities of experience from the angle of their capacity to enter into the adventure: that of intensifying variation occurring as part of a *process* of revaluation.⁷² It must see diversity as carrying whole new ecologies, promising the invention of qualities of experience worthy of struggle.

The theory of value as developed here does not stop at human neurodiversity. More far-reaching, its ecological aim extends beyond the human brain to nonhuman modes of experience. This is not only meant in the sense of attending to nonhuman entities as part of the ecological complex and its complexions. It entails an integral revaluation of values, opening onto new vistas of surplus value of life and new, as yet indeterminate, fields of struggle. This process hinges on adventures of axiological invention. It does not content itself with the self-congratulatory pat on the back of the feeling of being oh-so tolerant and accommodating, or the smug satisfaction of getting it morally “right” by the prevailing standard. The process of invention avails itself of excess: the qualitative surplus value of life of the *more-than-human* haloing every predominantly human occasion of experience with an infinity of “other” potentials.⁷³

It should be evident by now that the “actual ecologies” Guattari refers to in the opening quotation are not limited to the environmental. The overall ecology of values can be parsed into three reciprocally presupposing systems of complementarity, or virtual mutual inclusion: the environmental, the social, and the mental (the abstract).⁷⁴ The theory of value, as suggested by the singular vivacity of the quality of the experience of color, aims less at these systems per se than at their processual turnover into each other, and together into new postcapitalist patternings of experience, each a value in itself, such as it is, as well as carrying other-onward an immeasurably augmented intensity of virtual complexions, red ripe for experiential adventure beyond the human compass.

Notes

- 1 Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 91 (translation modified).
- 2 Raymond Ruyer, *La philosophie de la valeur* (Paris: Armand Collin, 1952), 204.
- 3 The formulae in the following paragraph also echo Peirce. See for example C. S. Peirce, *Pragmatism as a Principle and Method of Right Thinking* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 140. See also Brian Massumi, “Such as It Is: A Short Essay in Extreme Realism,” *Body and Society* 22:1 (March 2016): 115–127.
- 4 Raymond Ruyer, *Le monde des valeurs* (Paris: Aubier, 1948), 9–38.

- 5 Ibid., 12.
- 6 Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York: Free Press, 1967), 87.
- 7 Ruyer, *Le monde des valeurs*, 11. Deleuze also uses the term “subsistence,” perhaps in dialogue with Ruyer, for the mode of reality of the virtual. See Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 123 and Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 156.
- 8 “An eternal object can be described only in terms of its potential for ingression into the becoming of actual entities,” Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1978), 23. “If the term ‘eternal objects’ is disliked, the term ‘potentials’ would be suitable,” *ibid.*, 149. In general, the term “eternal objects” will be disliked in this chapter, but will be used sporadically.
- 9 Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, 87.
- 10 Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 338.
- 11 Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, 87.
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 29.
- 14 Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 114.
- 15 Deleuze emphasizes the indifference, or in his vocabulary “impassivity,” of the eternal object, whose whatness he calls the incorporeal “attribute” that actually appears in the guise of a physical quality (*Logic of Sense*, 4–5). Here, the word “quality” is used to straddle the physical appearing and the incorporeal abiding, as two sides of the same coin. Deleuze also emphasizes that singularities are always already extending toward variations on themselves, as well as (as will be seen later in this chapter) toward other singularities (*Logic of Sense*, 53, 109–10).
- 16 This complicates what at first reading appears to be a cut-and-dried distinction in the thought of Whitehead between “simple” eternal objects like a color and “complex” eternal objects. In the present account, this distinction will be reinterpreted as a difference of aspect, rather a typology of different categories of eternal objects, using Peirce’s concepts of Firstness and Thirdness (which reciprocally presuppose each other). Whitehead defines a “simple” eternal object as one that cannot be analyzed into components (*Science in the Modern World*, 166). This simplicity can only be relative to how the potential for color is prehended. As prehended from the perspective of its consequent nature, that is to say as it appears, a color will always be a contrastive factor of a complex field displaying the simplicity of its own immediate character (the field as a whole has the unified character of a Firstness). Even considered outside of any appearing, a color exhibits a virtual multiplicity, as involved in a system of color: a primary color, for example, cannot be conceived outside of its virtual accompaniment by its complementary, whose potential it carries (more on this later). As understood here, a simple eternal object is one that appears for an occasion, under certain conditions, as a function of the wanting, as

simply given. It is taken for simple—but this manner of taking must be part of its potential. Whitehead himself blurs the boundary between simple and complex eternal objects in passages where he refers to the “fusion” of the “individual essence” of an eternal object with other eternal objects (*Science in the Modern World*, 169), or says that “one” complex eternal object has a “unity” (*Process and Reality*, 24).

- 17 For Whitehead’s critique of the universal-particular couplet, see *Process and Reality*, 48–57.
- 18 Ruyer, *Le monde des valeurs*, 12.
- 19 Alfred North Whitehead, *Modes of Thought* (New York: Free Press, 1968), 132–3.
- 20 Alfred North Whitehead, *Concept of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 3, 171–3, and *Science in the Modern World*, 36, 66–7, 84, 87.
- 21 On the idea that potentials do not emerge and thus of themselves lack novelty, see Whitehead, *Science in the Modern World*, 103, and *Process and Reality*, 22. On appearance as opposed to emergence, see Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (New York: Free Press, 1967), 209–19.
- 22 Philip Ball, *Bright Earth: The Invention of Colour* (London: Penguin, 2001), 260–82.
- 23 Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies* (London: Athlone, 2000), 45; Félix Guattari, “From Transference to the Aesthetic Paradigm,” in *A Shock to Thought: Expression after Deleuze and Guattari*, ed. Brian Massumi (London: Routledge, 2002), 244.
- 24 Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 80, 176.
- 25 Ibid., 46, 59.
- 26 Ibid., 176–7, 180.
- 27 On the concept of “carrying” as a processual mutual envelopment of different qualities or modes of activity, see Erin Manning, *The Minor Gesture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 131–64. On vitality affect, see Brian Massumi, *Semblance and Event* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), 43–4, 112, 115, and Brian Massumi, *What Animals Teach Us About Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014b), 9, 25–30.
- 28 Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 69–70, 163–5.
- 29 See Bergson’s critique of quantitative notions of intensity in *Time and Free Will* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2001), Ch. 1.
- 30 Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 25, 85, 87.
- 31 “The whole gamut of relevance is ‘given,’ and must be referred to the decision of actuality” (Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 43). “The word [decision] is used in its root sense of a ‘cutting off’” (ibid., 44).
- 32 Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 127–69.
- 33 This is a reference to Foucault’s characterization of Deleuze’s theory of causality in *Difference and Repetition* as “stitched causality”; Michel Foucault, “Theatrum Philosophicum,” in *Language, Counter-Memory*,

Practice (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 173. In *Logique du sens* (1990), Deleuze characterizes the causal contribution of the virtual side as a “quasi-causality.”

- 34 I am departing here from Whitehead’s vocabulary. For Whitehead, the “eternal object” is indeed an object. But this is using object in the technical philosophical sense of something given. The eternal object gives potential (abstractly given; “abstract” in the sense of dodging confinement to any one occasion); the circumstances give the initial conditions for the occasion’s becoming bequeathed by past occasions (what Whitehead defines as the physically given). An eternal object is not an “object” in any normal sense of the word. Neither is it “eternal” in any normal sense of the word, as discussed in the treatment above of its paradoxical time signature, which prevents it from being in time. Whitehead uses “eternality” as a hedge against the usual connotation of “eternal” as endlessly enduring in time. My characterization of the misnomer that is the “eternal object” as “subjective” is a conscious inflection of Whitehead’s concept of the eternal object by Peirce’s concept of Firstness. Firstness in Peirce is subjective in an absolute sense, as requiring nothing else but itself for its reality, and being definable only in reference to itself (coming with the self-evidence of the “you know it when you see it”). Below, the occasion of experience as transferentially characterized by the “eternal object” is styled a “little absolute.” The apparent opposition between the “objective” as applied to the given circumstances that initially condition an occasion, and the “objective” givenness of the eternal object as the potential subjectively characterizing the occasion’s becoming, in fact falls away when it is considered that Whitehead specifies that what the formative factors making ingress as part of the initial circumstances donate is their *subjective form*: their pattern of activity. From this point of view, they figure as complex eternal objects making themselves felt as the initial or “primary” phase of the occasion’s becoming, and from which that becoming departs rather than toward which it is lured. They are the potential already given in presupposition, rather than the potential given as a proposition for the occasion’s attainment. The notion that the formative factors inherited in the circumstances donate subjective form ultimately dissolves any notion of objectivity in the normal sense as a factor in the process of becoming, earning Whitehead’s philosophy its status as a radical “panexperientialism.” The distinction between the object and the subject are distinctions between *roles* in the process of subjective becoming. The entities in Whitehead’s metaphysics can be characterized as *subjectivities without a subject* whose determination requires no object, in the sense in which that term is understood either in everyday life or traditionally in philosophy, against which their subjectivity would stand in opposition. For more on subjectivities without a subject, see Massumi, *What Animals Teach Us About Politics*, 40–1, 69–70, 96–7.
- 35 This is building on Simondon’s sense of transduction; Gilbert Simondon, *L’information à la lumière des notions de forme et d’information* (ILNFI) (Grenoble: Million, 2005), 32–3.
- 36 This is a reference to Whitehead’s concept of “reenaction,” which complicates the associated concept of “conformation of feeling” or

“conformal inheritance.” The latter concept states that an arising occasion of experience begins by inheriting the form of energy and vectored momentum bequeathed to it from the immediate past. However, each occasion is also said to “perish” as it reaches its completion. It would seem that the only way to reconcile these two propositions—perishing and reenaction, conformal inheritance and new arising—is to posit an imperceptible threshold or infinitely thin interval of activation at the hinge between the immediately preceding occasion leaving itself and its successor coming into itself. This threshold coincides with the impact of the lure proposing itself to feeling. On conformal inheritance and reenaction, see Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 163–6, 237–8.

- 37 Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 192.
- 38 “The organism [another word for the occasion of experience] is a unit of emergent value, a real fusion of the characters of eternal objects, emerging for its own sake;” Whitehead, *Science in the Modern World*, 107. See note 21 above for the non-emergent nature of potential’s appearing.
- 39 Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 316.
- 40 Ruyer, *La philosophie de la valeur*, 61–9.
- 41 This is Whitehead’s category of Conceptual Reversion: “There is secondary origination of conceptual feelings [the registering of the aimed-at quality of experience] with data which are partially identical with, and partially diverse from, the eternal objects forming the data in the primary phase”; Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 249.
- 42 Ruyer, *Le monde des valeurs*, 11.
- 43 Ruyer, *Le monde des valeurs*, 48 (emphasis added).
- 44 Ibid., 142 (emphasis added).
- 45 Erin Manning, *Always More Than One* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).
- 46 Ruyer, *Le monde des valeurs*, 12.
- 47 Ibid., 13
- 48 Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 34; Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 203. The structure of DNA is the obvious example in the case biological individuation. But it is by no means the only kind of germinal form contributing to life. Simondon speaks of the “germs” of crystal formation as a model for his theory of individuation (*ILNFI*, 75 note). It is important that it in the case of DNA it is its *structural quality* that is the “germ.” What characterizes DNA in its formative activity is this complex eternal object. Whitehead specifies that his “common elements” are complex eternal objects. Common elements or germinal forms are smaller-scale transductions embedded in a larger transductive becoming. Transduction, according to Simondon, is by nature analogical (pertaining to the transfer of characters), at whatever scale.
- 49 Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 202, 205; Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 34.
- 50 The corresponding term in Simondon is a “transductive series” (*ILNFI*,

- 211, 216–17. Whitehead refers to “historic routes (of inheritance)” throughout *Process and Reality*.
- 51 Simondon, *ILNFI*, 331.
- 52 The concept of patterned contrasts is central to Whitehead’s theory of value, whose highest value is “beauty” understood as the “mutual adaptation of the several factors in an occasion of existence” in a way that intensifies the experience (*Adventures of Ideas*, 252). This mutual adaptation is the patterning of contrast. Beauty is a value in itself: “any system of things which in any wide sense is beautiful is to that extent justified in its existence” (265); “beauty is left as the one aim which by its very nature is self-justifying” (266). Although Whitehead equates beauty with “Harmony,” what we normally call harmony is actually a sterile, lowest degree of it by Whitehead’s reckoning. The most intense beauty, that which energizes transductive series of becomings, must have an element of “Discord” (256–66, esp. 266) and imperfection (276).
- 53 This is analyzed in Massumi, *What Animals Teach Us About Politics* as a “supernormal tendency” traversing animality.
- 54 Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 286.
- 55 Massumi, *Semblance and Event*, 20–1, 179, 181–2. On the “minutest” occasion of experience including its “own others,” see William James, *A Pluralistic Universe* (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 271–2.
- 56 Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 180. Or again: “The aboriginal data in terms of which the pattern weaves itself are the aspects of shapes, of sense-objects, and of other eternal objects whose self-identity is not dependent on the flux of things. Wherever such objects have ingression into the general flux, they interpret events, each to the other. They are here in the perceiver; but, as perceived by him, they convey for him something of the total flux which is beyond himself. The subject-object relation takes its origin in the double role of these eternal objects. They are modifications of the subject, but only in their character of conveying aspects of other subjects in the community of the universe. Thus no individual subject can have independent reality, since it is a prehension of limited aspects of subjects other than itself” (Whitehead, *Science in the Modern World*, 151).
- 57 Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, 113.
- 58 This is Whitehead’s theory of negative prehension: “A negative prehension is the definite exclusion of that item from positive contribution to the subject’s own real internal constitution. This doctrine involves the position that a negative prehension expresses a bond ... those eternal objects which are not felt are not therefore negligible” (*Process and Reality*, 41). All eternal objects contribute to each occasion of experience, anywhere along the timeline, however vaguely or faintly. This is allied to the notion that alternate routes are enveloped in each occasion of experience: “Each perspective for any one qualitative abstraction such as a number, or a colour, involves an infinitude of alternative potentialities” (Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 66–7).
- 59 Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 193.

- 60 On life process as a bid for freedom, see Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 104.
- 61 Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, 112, 114. This is a somewhat different take on Guattari's concept of complexions than the one in Massumi, *What Animals Teach Us About Politics*, 78–9, 85–6.
- 62 On the infinite background of potential and the proposition, see Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 112. See also Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 281. The equivalent concept in Ruyer's work is that of the "theme"; in Raymond Ruyer, *La genèse des formes vivantes* (Paris: PUF, 1958), 11–48 and *passim*.
- 63 Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 279.
- 64 For a treatment of this question of the direct perception of relation, with an attention to the question of value, see Brian Massumi, "Envisioning the Virtual," in *The Oxford Handbook of Virtuality*, ed. Mark Grimshaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 55–70. For the concept of radical empiricism, see William James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1996).
- 65 The relational is essentially double. It involves other qualities in potentiality, as well as other actual realizations, and does so in a way that does not belie a quality's Firstness, or little-absoluteness: "An eternal object, considered as an abstract entity, cannot be divorced from its reference to other eternal objects, and from its reference to actuality generally; though it is disconnected from its actual modes of ingression into definite occasions. This principle is expressed by the statement that each eternal object is a 'relational essence'" (Whitehead, *Science in the Modern World*, 159–60). On relational essence, see also Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 68. Specifically on color: "We do not perceive disembodied colour or disembodied extensiveness: we perceive *the wall's* colour and extensiveness. The experienced fact is 'colour away on the wall for us.' Thus the colour and the spatial perspective are abstract elements, characterizing the concrete way in which the wall enters into our experience. They are therefore relational elements between the 'percipient at that moment,' and that other equally actual entity, or set of entities, which we call the 'wall at that moment.' But the mere colour and the mere spatial perspective are very abstract entities, because they are only arrived at by discarding the concrete relationship between the wall-at-that-moment and the percipient-at-that-moment. This concrete relationship is a physical fact which may be very unessential to the wall and very essential to the percipient"; Alfred North Whitehead, *Symbolism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1985), 15–16. See also Whitehead, *Concept of Nature*, 149–50. Whitehead formulates the basic tenet of radical empiricism, without using that term: "the relations holding between natural entities are themselves natural entities, namely they are also factors of fact, there for sense-awareness" (*Concept of Nature*, 14).
- 66 Toni Negri, "Twenty Theses on Marx," in *Marxism Beyond Marxism*, ed. Saree Makdisi, Cesare Casarino, and Rebecca E. Karl (London: Routledge, 1996), 151–2.
- 67 Ruyer, *Le monde des valeurs*, 13.

- 68 Ibid., 11.
- 69 The application of the norm and the standard judgment of insignificance vis-à-vis “anomalous” variations plays out, of course, in much more complicated ways than this brief sketch is able to express. For example, the dismissal of the anomaly can flip over into an affirmation of the “exception.” This is seen, for example, in the popular culture trope of the autistic savant and their IT prowess, or in the older stereotype of the “good” racial minority (the exceptional individual who has overcome their “social handicap” to succeed in life and become one of “us”) or the “good cripple” (who doesn’t make the able-bodied feel awkward when they don’t know how to respond to their being in a wheelchair). Discussions within the neurodiversity movement often focus on this dynamic, pointing out that there are only “exceptions” because there is still the rule. These tropes are falsely inclusive strategies for saving the dominance of standard in the face of demands for a radical revaluation—feel-good strategies for neurotypical saving face.
- 70 Manning, *The Minor Gesture*.
- 71 Manning, *Always More Than One* and *The Minor Gesture*.
- 72 For an analysis of the difference between system and process, see Brian Massumi, “National Enterprise Emergency: Steps Toward an Ecology of Powers,” in *Ontopower: War, Powers, and the State of Perception* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 41–3.
- 73 Brian Massumi, *What Animals Teach Us About Politics*; Manning, *Always More Than One*.
- 74 Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*.

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