Surroundings: Deleuze and Guattari

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ABSTRACT *Deleuze and Guattari, as strict immanentists and consistent proponents of an "in-the-middle" or "in-between," had little philosophical time for notions of "the outside" or "the beyond" construed in terms invoking traditional ideas of transcendence (even though they created their own absolutely original notion of an "immanent transcendence." Any such "in-the-middle," however, must presuppose a milieu that is outside that "in-the-middle," albeit one constituting a surround or 'interzone' (a term borrowed from William Burroughs' novel* Naked Lunch*) for the "in-the-middle" in question, even if this surrounding milieu or interzone will, like its contiguous "in-the-middle," also be unequivocally immanent. The essay discusses the kind of conceptual assemblage pertaining to interality/interology that can be constructed with regard to Deleuzo-Guattarian "surroundings."*

KEYWORDS *Deleuze; Guattari; In-the-middle*

RÉSUMÉ *Deleuze et Guattari, comme immanentistes strictes et promoteurs loyaux d'un « au-milieu » ou « entre-deux », avait peu de patience philosophique pour les notions d'un « extérieur » ou d'un « au-delà » interprétées en termes invoquant les idées traditionnelles de la transcendance (bien qu'ils aient créé leur propre notion absolument originale d'une « transcendance immanente »). Un tel « au-milieu », cependant, suppose un milieu qui est à l'extérieur de l'« au-milieu », quoique constituant des environs ou une « interzone » (mes excuses ici à William Burroughs d'avoir volé ce dernier terme de son roman* Naked Lunch*) pour l'«au-milieu» en question, même si ce milieu environnant ou cette interzone, comme son « au-milieu » contiguë, sera également et sans équivoque immanent. L'essai traite de l'espèce d'agencement conceptuel concernant l'interalité / l'interologie qui pourrait être construit à l'égard des « environs » deleuzoguattariens.*

MOTS CLÉS *Delueze; Guattari; Entre*

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, as strict immanentists and consistent proponents of an "in-the-middle" or "in-between," had little philosophical time for notions of "the outside" or "the beyond' construed in terms invoking traditional ideas of transcendence (even though they created their own absolutely original notion of an "immanent

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transcendence," about which more will be said later. Any such "in-the-middle," however, must presuppose a milieu that is outside *that* "in-the-middle," albeit one constituting a *surround* or "interzone" (half-hearted apologies here to William Burroughs for my theft of the latter term from his novel *Naked Lunch*) for the "in-the-middle" in question, even if this surrounding milieu or *interzone* will, like its contiguous "in-the-middle," also be unequivocally immanent. So what can be said about this Deleuzo-Guattarian *surround* or *interzone*? Insights into this topic are present throughout the œuvres of Deleuze and Guattari, so let us try to see what kind of conceptual assemblage can be constructed with regard to Deleuzo-Guattarian "surroundings."

Two difficulties face any attempt to delineate this Deleuzo-Guattarian *surround(ing)* or *interzone.* The first is the realization that Deleuze himself makes a number of significant distinctions between terms that seemingly convey the same meaning in everyday usage, namely, *the outside, the exterior,* and *the forms of exteriority.* To quote Deleuze (1986):

> We must even distinguish between several correlative agencies, of which there are at least three. There is first of all *the outside* which exists as an unformed element of forces: the latter come from and remain attached to the outside, which stirs up their relations and draws out their diagrams. And then there is *the exterior* as the area of concrete assemblages, where relations between forces are realized. And lastly there are *the forms of exteriority,* since the realization takes place in a split or disjunction between two different forms that are exterior to one another and yet share the same assemblages (the confinements and interiorizations being only transitory figures on the surface of these forms). (p. 43, emphasis in original)

The second difficulty is the several different Deleuzo-Guattarian angles from which one can attempt this theorization of the *surround(ing)* or *interzone*—these concepts are at work, whether implicitly or overtly, in any number of their key formulations, involving such terms as "assemblage" (components of any assemblage always being more or less adjacent to each other), "multiplicity" (if there are many, then how do they surround, or not surround each other?), "the fold/folding" (folding "in" always presupposes a surrounding "outside" from which the inward folding proceeds), "the rhizome" (rhizomatic roots always exist in an unstructured proliferation existing in relations of distance and nearness to each other, thereby posing the question of their milieu), "the line of flight" (a flight from where, and to where?), "the event" (events are unavoidably positioned within or next to other events, as when the event "the battle of the Somme" is itself a constituent of the bigger event "the First World War"), and so forth.

Also relevant here is Deleuze's proposition, which he attributed to Foucault even though it was as much his own, that philosophical universals or substantives are best understood if their noun-forms are turned into verb-forms, exhibiting in the process the outlines of the practices that are the basis of their respective conceptual operations or functions. Hence, the putatively universal concept "the general" is to be resolved into the practices of *generalization;* "the plural" into those of *pluralization;* "the individual" into those of *individuation;* "the universal" into those of *universalization;* "the multiple" into those of *multiplication;* "the singular" into those of *singularization;*

and so on. It follows from this that if we are to speak in a Deleuzo-Guattarian way of "the surround" or the "interzone," then adhering to this strategic proposition adjures us philosophically to transmute these notions into their enabling and subtending practices of *surrounding* or *interzoning*. Bearing in mind of course that any practice underlying these notions of "surrounding" will itself be surrounded by the three agencies mentioned above by Deleuze (*the outside, the exterior,* and *the forms of exteriority*)—indeed, with Deleuze and Guattari one is perforce dealing at all times with nothing less than a conceptual architectonic even when examining the most material and concrete of entities, an architectonic whose elements will have to be acknowledged when registering the force and saliency of one or the other components of this comprehensive conceptual edifice.

As indicated, there are many potential entry-ways into a Deleuzo-Guattarian conceptualization of "the surround" or the "interzone." For now, let us attempt to see how this conceptualization works with regard to the notion of an "assemblage." An assemblage for Deleuze and Guattari is an assorted ensemble of bodies, entities, properties, territories, and expressions that are assembled together in a particular configuration at a specific place and time. The assemblage comes about through the coalescence of forces that give the assemblage in question its function and that form the connections between heterogeneous elements enabling its emergence as *that* particular assemblage. In addition to these forces that enable connections within assemblages, other forces will facilitate connections between assemblages, even those of the most disparate kind. Unless blocked, the "raison" of an assemblage is an ongoing innovation and production—impelled by a ceaseless desiring-production, this will involve the production of new kinds of expression, new ways of living and learning, novel forms of territorial and spatial expansion or contraction, new societies and organizations, and so forth.

Interestingly enough, it was Guattari perhaps more than Deleuze who gnawed away for years at the "problematic" of the comprehensive field or milieu that allowed the different interrelating zones of this desiring-production to emerge, even though both thinkers were deeply concerned with re-conceptualizations of subjectivity that would avoid the perceived reductionism of structuralism and phenomenology.[1]

In his practice at the La Borde clinic, Guattari was working with schizophrenic patients who were often in states of extreme catatonic withdrawal, lacking the intact subjectivities and egos of the typical neurotic individual of psychoanalytic theory. The schizophrenics Guattari encountered at La Borde, in contrast to Freud's neurotic patients, possessed mere slivers of subjectivity and shattered ego-fragments that made any kind of focused speech and behaviour difficult, if not impossible. Hence the task of Guattari and his fellow staff-members at the clinic was to create workable "transversalities" between these different slivers and fragments, creating connectivities between them that would at least be resilient enough to enable a patient to begin to negotiate their everyday world. The Freudian "talking cure" was simply unobtainable as a resource for the kinds of patients who came to La Borde, with subjectivities typically too split and disjointed to provide them with linguistic and behavioural "receptors" stable or adequate enough for feasible participation in a Freudian talking cure. Often considerable ingenuity on the part of the therapist was required to help construct

transversalities that could benefit patients going through a severe and protracted crisis, a case in point here being the following episode involving the Scottish pioneer of antipsychiatry, R.D. Laing, with whom Guattari had a fraught acquaintanceship and a number of intellectual disagreements, helpfully documented by Dosse (2010) (some important commonalities of interest notwithstanding):

> In Chicago, Laing was invited by some doctors to examine a young girl diagnosed as schizophrenic. The girl was locked into a padded cell in a special hospital and sat there naked. She usually spent the whole day rocking to and fro. The doctors asked Laing for his opinion … Unexpectedly, Laing stripped off naked himself and entered her cell. There he sat with her, rocking in time to her rhythm. After about 20 minutes she started speaking, something she had not done for several months. The doctors were amazed. "Did it never occur to you to do that?" Laing commented … (Clay, 1997, as quoted by Austin, last para.)

The milieu in which this novel transversality between Laing and the severely catatonic patient was created consists of very disparate entities that had to be assembled according to a multivalent logic or logics—bodies (both naked and clothed, indeed one can assume that the catatonic young girl's doctors at the hospital were wearing the officially prescribed white coats), bodily movements (rocking in this case), hospital rooms (such as the padded cell) and buildings, voices and everyday speech, facial expressions, the discourses of psychiatry, medical routines and practices, and so on. At La Borde, Guattari and his associates would have been constructing transversalities and their accompanying assemblages on a similarly large scale, albeit without the emblematic white coats and the discourses of a full-blown psychiatric practice.[2]

When it came to providing cartographies (an undertaking Guattari called "metamodelization") of these complex formations he called "ecosophic objects," Guattari's preference was for a non-mathematical and non-representational logic based on the quadrant rather than the binary or triad.[3] The ecosophic object is constituted on the basis of four functors ("functor/*foncteur*" being a term in mathematics designating the mapping between categories): 1) material, energetic, and semiotic *fluxes*; 2) concrete and abstract machinic *phylums*; 3) virtual *universes of value*; and 4) finite existential *territories* (Guattari, 1995).

Janell Watson provides a grid (see Figure 1) of Guattari's four functors or functives (2009, p. 100). Guattari also makes it clear that by resorting to the notion of a functor or functives he is seeking an alternative to the paradigms or conceptual templates espoused by Freudians, Saussureans, and Marxists:

> To speak of machines rather than drives, Fluxes rather than libido, existential Territories rather than the instances of the self and of transference, incorporeal Universes rather than unconscious complexes and sublimation, chaosmic entities rather than signifiers—fitting ontological dimensions together in a circular manner rather than dividing the world up into infrastructure and superstructure—may not simply be a matter of vocabulary! (Guattari, 1995, p. 126)

Figure 1

Actual		Virtual	
Expression Ontic Modeling Given Libido Effect		**Content** Pathic Metamodeling Giving Unconscious Affect	
DISCURSIVITY			
discursive		non-discursive	
REFERENCE			
exo-reference		endo-reference	
Possible Infinite Irreversible Far-from-equilibrium	**DETERRITORIALIZATION** **CONSISTENCY** exo-consistency	**Φ PHYLA** Machinic, prcessual Actual possible Irreversibility RHIZOMES Formal causality	**U UNIVERSES** Intercorporeal Virtual possible Singularization CONSTELLATIONS Final causality

Real
Finite
Reversible
Near equilibrium
	endo-consistency	**F FLOWS**
		Economic, energetic,-
		  spatial-temporal
		Material and/or semiotic
		  (libido, capital, signifier,
		  labor, etc.)
		Actual real
		Necessitation
		COMPLEXIONS
		Material causality
			T TERRITORIES
			Existential
			Virtual-real
			
			Heterogenesis
			CUT-OUTS
			Efficient causality

Source: Watson (1995)

Of these four functors, fluxes or flows are perhaps most familiar to the readers of *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Fluxes or flows, redolent with all the broadly angled connotations of fluidity or liquidity, were chosen by Deleuze and Guattari as a direct counter to the ostensible rigidities of an explicit or implicit structuralism. Flows can of course encompass a wide and incongruous-seeming range of phenomena. In *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, flows and fluxes incorporate matter, energy, words and their myriad and sometimes almost impossible to attain meanings (Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* was a particular favourite of Guattari's), desire, libido, commodities, weapons, metals, capital; and they have conceptual affiliations with nomads, deterritorializations, machines, and smooth space (see Watson, 2013). In the context of our discussion, R.D. Laing's decisive creation of a transversality in the case of the catatonic patient would amount to the unclogging of an energetic flow of speech that had been blocked as a result of her catatonic condition.

Guattari's second functor—concrete and machinic phylums—derives from the insight that evolutionary mutation operates not only in the realm of organic matter, but also encompasses machinic implements and technologies. There are animal phyla, but also machinic phyla:

> We may speak of a machinic phylum, or technological Iineage, wherever
> we find a constellation of singularities, prolongable by certain operations,

> which converge, and make the operations converge, upon one or several assignable traits of expression (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 406).

Or again in *A Thousand Plateaus*, where these phyla are said to be "matter in movement":

> We always get back to this definition: the machinic phylum is materiality, natural or artificial, and both simultaneously; it is matter in movement, in flux, in variation, matter as a conveyor of singularities and traits of expression. (pp. 409)

> … Unformed matter, the phylum, is not dead, brute, homogeneous matter, but a matter-movement bearing singularities or haecceities, qualities, and even operations (itinerant technological lineages). (pp. 512)

As a functor, the machinic phyla share the property of discursivity with their correlative functor, the energetic flows. Our subjectivities are plugged into the machinic phyla and vice versa, so that they function as our technological prostheses. Hence, in the context of our discussion, an electro-shock machine, as it alters the subjective dispositions of a patient, would be a component in the machinic phylum into which the La Borde clinic is inserted.

The third functor—virtual incorporeal universes of value—designates the shared aspects of subjectivity that come to exist only when they are embodied in the fourth function, the existential territories:

> [I]n a certain fashion, all modelling systems are valid, all are acceptable, in my opinion. This is solely to the extent that their principles of intelligibility give up any universalist pretention [*sic*] and admit that they have no other mission than to contribute to the cartography of existential Territories, implying sensible, cognitive, affective, aesthetic, etc. Universes, for clearly delimited areas and periods of time. (Guattari, 2013, p. 3)

As the name implies, virtual incorporeal universes are crystallizations of values or symbolic and cultural references characteristic of a particular epoch or social assemblage. Hence the therapeutic values espoused at La Borde are those specific to mid- to late-twentieth-century western Europe and North America—at an earlier time a schizophrenic would have been ministered to by a priest or monk, or in a non-Western milieu, even today, by a shaman or medicine man or woman.

The fourth function—the existential territories—within which the universes of value are embodied, refers to the lived experience of the body, self, family, a "native" tongue, race, and ethnicity:

> The objects of art and desire are apprehended within existential Territories which are at the same time the body proper, the self, the maternal body, lived space, refrains of the mother tongue, familiar faces, family lore, ethnicity. (Guattari, 1995, p. 95)

Or as Guattari says elsewhere about our lives as individuated beings:

> We must start from a multivalent logic, and accept the notion of identity which I call existential territory, because we cannot live outside our bodies,

our friends, some sort of human cluster, and at the same time, we are burst-
ing out of this situation. (Guattari, 1996, p. 216)

This then is the ontology of Deleuze and Guattari (or at any rate, it is one way of
framing it, there of course being other, alternative framings for this ontology). Our
lives, whether as individuals or as social beings (the two of course being inextricably
bound together), are inserted in a vast and complex web whose ecosophic cartography
is rendered by the application of these four functions or functives. In this gigantic web,
countless bodies are surrounded by groups, groups are surrounded by their milieu,
the myriad milieux surrounded by their universes.

No one component in this web is isolated from the other; everything surrounds,
and is surrounded by, everything else. All things coexist and interact in an immense,
pullulating chaosmos, a chaosmos marked by an irreducible heterogenesis in which a
potentially infinite number of singularities (with their associated subjectivities) are
created out of energy-desire, die out when voided of energy-desire, become merged
with other singularities when energy-desire takes a different course, and so on, and so
on, until … [4]

So how do Deleuze and Guattari advance the paradigms known as "interality"
and "interology?" The obvious instance of interality in this article is the episode in-
volving the catatonic girl, when the maverick psychiatrist Laing, by resorting to what
would typically be regarded as a breach of medical ethics (a doctor getting naked in
front of a patient!), was able to unblock a communicative impasse that conventional
psychiatry had been unable to resolve (and may even have reinforced). Deleuze and
Guattari contribute to the study of interology by providing us with an extensive con-
ceptual armature for characterizing and analyzing the myriad processes of interality.
This armature includes the following concepts: constructivism, fabulation, creative
transformation, nomadicism, multiplicity, differentiation/differenciation, synthesis,
deterritorialization/reterritorialization, milieu, process, body without organs, lines of
flight, foldings, rhizome, assemblage, capture, chaos, becomings, emergence, move-
ment, virtuality, attractors, intercessors, active/reactive, affect, transversality, ecosophy,
and so on. The outcome is a monumental architectonic for the organization of the
myriad fields of experience and thought, these fields being the domain in which inter-
ality plays itself out, and which interology has as its object.

Notes

1. This much is clear from the hugely informative biography of Deleuze and Guattari by François Dosse
(2010), *Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari*. Dosse, despite some factual inaccuracies, throws much light
on the complexities and ramifications of their intellectual collaboration, with Guattari "the inveterate
autodidact" (in his own words) producing "rough diamonds" at the seemingly manic rate of "three
ideas a minute" that the more measured Deleuze, who also had a more traditional academic pedigree,
"polished" into philosophical prose. Guattari always found writing difficult, despite his prodigious in-
tellect, and preferred to express his ideas—maybe "models" is the more accurate term—in diagram
after diagram. Dosse notes that Guattari was sometimes unhappy with the way Deleuzean prose con-
veyed, or rather flattened-out in the eyes of Guattari, the latter's diagrammed models.

2. As was to be expected, two issues were recurrent points of contention and negotiation for those
who ran La Borde: how deregulated was it to be as an institution for those severely challenged when
it came to a modicum of everyday functioning and the role of medication in the treatment of patients

who were often unresponsive to conventional therapies and medical regimens. Dosse (2010) provides a wealth of detail on this. He shows that Guattari was generally in favour both of regulation (e.g., he would insist that patients get out of bed and adhere to a daily timetable) and of the use of medication (frowned-upon by the anti-psychiatrists on the grounds that establishment psychiatrists basically medicated their patients not to help them, but to smooth-over their own inadequacies as medical practitioners—hence Guattari's disagreement with anti-psychiatrists such as Laing who were antipathetic to medicating patients). A form of social or group psychotherapy was the institutional norm at La Borde, but within this broad ambit "orthodox" psychiatric interventions were permitted (such as electro-shock therapy, often requested by those patients dealing with debilitating anxieties that could not be calmed down by any other means). Dosse indicates that Guattari was fairly comfortable with the terms of this set-up. (Incidentally, Dosse also says that Deleuze was uncomfortable being around those who were mentally broken-down, and he avoided La Borde for this reason.)

3. To quote Guattari on his preference for the quadrant when it comes to metamodelling: "[T]he categories of metamodelization proposed here … are … of interest because they come in fours and allow us to break free of tertiary descriptions which always end up falling back into dualisms" (Guattari, 1995, p. 31).

4. I am grateful to Janell Watson for help in the construction of my argument. Any errors are of course mine alone.

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