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SUBJECTS AS EFFECTS OF AFFECTS: A PEDAGOGY OF THE SENSES

Andrej Radman

Introduction: Quasi-causality

The pressing problems of today do not fit neatly within disciplinary boundaries. This means that the future of learning will depend on the capacity to cultivate a culture of ‘trespassing’ that renders transdisciplinarity indispensable. Transdisciplinarity should be distinguished from interdisciplinarity. While the latter operates on the basis of general equivalence, the former can be read as a critique of the substantialist tradition. This tradition has contributed to the persistent misunderstanding of relation as inter-action between fully constituted terms, namely the knowing subject and the known object. Intra-action, on the other hand, is interested not in the given (the manifest level of reality), but in how the given is given, or the quasi-causal relation that cannot be reduced to its terms (Barad 2007: 33). The chapter will map the role of affect in a heteropoiesis that resists the collapse of the sensible into the intelligible, the unconscious desiring into the apperceptive volition and the singular significance into the linguistic signification. As Brian Massumi explicates:

[T]he basic definition [of affect] comes from Spinoza, who spoke of ‘powers to affect and be affected’ as what defines a body and a life. A power to affect and be affected is a potential to move, act, perceive, and think – in a word, powers of existence. The ‘to be affected’ part of the definition says that a body’s powers of existence are irreducibly relational. They can only be expressed in dynamic relation with other bodies and elements of the environment. The power to affect and the power to be affected are inseparable; they are two sides of the same coin. They are reciprocals, growing and shrinking as a function of each other. So from the start, affect overflows the individual, tying its capacities to its relational entanglement with others and the outside. Affect is fundamentally transindividual.

(Massumi 2017, emphasis added)

A pedagogy of the senses, whose logic of sensation is sympoietic with the logic of relation, can trace a path out of anthropocentrism by recasting subjectification

in terms of non-human forces within the human. This approach avoids the poorly posed question of ‘what affects are?’ and instead focuses on what they do. The short answer is that affects play a significant role in the processes of subjectification. I will argue that thought emerges involuntarily, provoked by asignifying signs (Hauptmann and Radman 2014). But why would an architect be interested in something that, at first glance, appears unrelated to architecture? Well, that depends on how we define architecture. I follow those who consider architecture irreducible to structures. Instead, architecture is best approached in terms of operation, hence the title: ‘Subjects as Effects of Affects’. Its primary function is the production of affects, which should not be underestimated, especially once we agree that thought does not originate in thinking. ‘Something in the world forces us to think’ (Deleuze 1994: 139). Architecture shouldn’t be reduced to its ontic register, and the aversion to reductionist strategies and logical entailments is precisely what the term ‘ecology’ stands for. Unfortunately, this concept has been conflated with greenwashing and needs to be rescued from such idiocy. Inspired by Félix Guattari (2013), I will argue for architecture’s role in anthropogenesis, not simply in the world but with the world.

The experience of architecture and the built environment goes beyond empirical conditions. It is prospective and not limited to what is presently sensible. To paraphrase the radical empiricist William James (2008: 32), we are virtual knowers before we are actual knowers. Affect, as the capacity to affect and be affected, differs from affection because it is not subjective. Interestingly, it is not objective either, or it is both at once. This is how James Jerome Gibson (1986), the founder of the School of Ecological Perception, defines a related concept of affordance, which is the potential for action available in our environments. The reason why affect/affordance is not objectifiable or divisible is that it is relational. Such reversal, where relations are antecedent to their terms, may be disorienting for those accustomed to representational thought. However, if we continued to pursue the philosophy of access, which is how a fully constituted subject relates to a discrete object, we would perpetuate the fallacy of misplaced concreteness (Whitehead 1978). As Gilles Deleuze (1978) proposed, the opposite of the concrete is not the abstract but the discrete.

The word ‘concrete’ has a different etymology from ‘discrete’. ‘Concrete’ comes from the Latin word meaning ‘grown together’, while ‘discrete’ comes from the Latin word meaning ‘separated’ (Adkins 2016). By replacing the traditional pairing of concrete/abstract with the unconventional pairing of concrete/discrete, we can gain a new ethico-aesthetic perspective. The process of concretion involves a material ethics that goes beyond dogmatic morality (Radman 2018). According to Georg Canguilhem (1991), life itself becomes a normative activity – a continuous revaluation of values in Nietzschean terms – where normativity continuously establishes contingently obligatory rules. In other words, the world is not ontologically separated into distinct parts, and there is nothing inherently necessary about it. Instead, it continuously evolves along with its teleonomies and epistemologies. Karen Barad’s neologism ‘ethico-onto-epistem-ology’ (Barad 2007: 185) was foreshadowed in the Simondonian formula: the knowledge of individuation is the individuation of knowledge (Simondon 1992).

The Baradian entanglement of ethics, ontology and epistemology may be complemented by Rosi Braidotti's 'hyphenation' of zoe, geo and techno as constitutive of more-than-human life (Braidotti 2021). This neologism designates that the organic has always been utterly dependent on the inorganic (Radman and Kousoulas 2021). Again, the emphasis is on processuality, irreducibility and nonlinearity. Whether one has technophilic or Luddite leanings, it is impossible to disregard the ongoing evolution 'by means other than life', which affects both phenotypical and genotypical individuation (evo-devo) (Gorny and Radman 2022). It is beyond dispute that cognition is embodied, embedded, extended, enactive and affective (Protevi 2013). However, acknowledging the circumstantial character of life is not to be mistaken for a declaration of relativism. Simondon's formula from above is not about the relativity of truth but about the truth of the relative, that is, of the relational or ecological. Things could have been otherwise. While dogmatism is too quick to fill the supposed gap between being and thought with a robust (i.e. universal) concept, the empirical tradition indulges in leaving it wide open in a sceptical fashion. Similarly, with the twin couple of Realism and Nominalism, where one is supposed to choose between the mind-independent reality and numerous idiosyncrasies, the logic applied is that of the excluded middle. By contrast, the ecological injunction is to bring the middle back. We have to start thinking through the middle, *par le milieu* (Stengers 2010).

The concept of affect becomes crucial. To paraphrase Spinoza, we will never conclusively know what architecture can do. Such an open confession of ignorance liberates us from the hylomorphic approach where the active force is meant to keep the passive matter in check without really checking on what is going on. Take, for example, the logic of deduction, where the premise already contains the answers, or the illegitimate extrapolation in the case of induction. Only abduction may be considered 'plastic' enough to avoid the shackles of mechanistic (techno)determinism and organicist teleology. Abduction operates incrementally and cumulatively by way of infinitesimal hypotheses that are tested on the go. Instead of maintaining a megalomaniac 'critical distance', a speculative pragmatist approach compels one to intervene in the causal fabric of reality so as to tease out salient points. There is no other viable way to distinguish between the necessary and contingent or between the ordinary and singular.

In Deleuze and Guattari's theoretical framework, an approach that acknowledges consistency without relying on a totalizing perspective is called schizoanalysis which implies a recursive causality that contradicts traditional mechanistic linear causality (Hui 2019). The actual state of affairs serves as a cause that produces an effect, which in turn becomes an incorporeal but real cause. This quasi-cause, which Deleuze borrows from Stoic philosophy, determines the degrees of freedom at the manifest level (Radman 2023). Love, for example, can be seen as a quasi-cause that is not reducible to the individual lovers. The reciprocal determination between the 'prosaic' cause and the 'poietic' quasi-causal effect is what Gregory Bateson in his late work calls the 'sacred' (Bateson and Bateson 1988). The term delineates the sympoietic relationship between dynamic and static geneses (Radman 2019: 65), a pursuit we will navigate through three conceptual triads.

Peirce's triad

Charles Sanders Peirce's nomenclature identifies three distinct ontological domains: Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness, which correspond to feeling, action and learning, respectively (Peirce 1955). The first domain deals with the particularity of existence, separate from volition and cognition. The second domain pertains to the capacity for adjusting means to achieve ends, involving relationality. Finally, the third domain concerns the process of learning and the emergence of the 'larval subject', where the possessive and expressive aspects are fully conjoined. Counterintuitively, the expressive aspect comes first, followed by the possessive: if this feeling is mine, then there must also be a 'me'.

This triad firmly links sensibility to sense (directionality), and matter to manner, where the former is finite while the latter remains unlimited. The apparent oxymoron of 'unlimited finity' is known as the 'superfold' (Deleuze 1988: 131). The term designates the psycho-social individuation that goes beyond psychic individuation. Such trans-individuation is not to be confused with inter-individuation, which puts already-constituted interacting individuals in relation. The ethico-political ramifications are significant. If one does not start with a fully constituted subject, then the concept of a liberal individual, who makes rational choices and bears responsibility, makes no sense. To truly ecologize our thought, we ought to insert another hyphen, as Donna Haraway does between the terms 'response' and 'ability'. Response-ability designates the ability to respond through the milieu, which becomes a matter of power, not duty (Haraway 2016: 29). As Bateson insisted, the basic 'unit of survival' is the organism plus its environment. One cannot leave out the system within which an event is determined. Crucially, the boundary of the system does not coincide with that of the so-called self:

Consider a man felling a tree with an axe. Each stroke of the axe is modified or corrected, according to the shape of the cut face of the tree left by the previous stroke. This self-corrective (i.e. mental) process is brought about by a total system, tree-eyes-brain-muscles-axe-stroke-tree; and it is this total system that has the characteristics of immanent mind.

More correctly, we should spell the matter out as: (differences in tree) – (differences in retina) – (differences in brain) – (differences in muscles) – (differences in movement of axe) – (differences in tree), etc. What is transmitted around the circuit is transforms of differences. And ... a difference which makes a difference is an *idea* or unit of information.

But this is *not* how the average Occidental sees the event sequence of tree felling. He says, 'I cut down the tree' and he even believes that there is a delimited agent, the 'self', which performed a delimited 'purposive' action upon a delimited object.

(Bateson 1971: 230)

Gibson's triad

Despite their remarkable ingenuity, neither James nor Peirce managed to descend from a relatively high level of abstraction. Fortunately, their disciple Gibson did so. In this regard, we will now focus on his concepts developed in *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*, his last and most influential book, which provides several concepts that challenge the traditional representational theory of perception (Gibson 1986). The hylomorphic formula, which renders an image utterly dependent on consciousness, was most explicitly criticized by Henri Bergson (2004). It qualifies as a theory of enrichment because it effectively relies on addition. The world, supposedly, would be completely unintelligible without the contribution of some sort of schema (a Kantian mental category) that serves as an ordering device. By contrast, Gibson's direct (non-representational) perception relies on subtraction: don't ask what's inside your head, but rather what's your head inside of (Mace 1977). There is always more to reality than in perception, and the real is not a formless chaotic swirl onto which structure must be imposed by cognitive processes, i.e. by addition (Heft 2001: 317).

The transition from the additive to the subtractive approach is consistent with Leibnizian monadology, where the clear and obscure zones depend on proximity to the point of view (or the point of hearing or smelling), which are always multiple and not necessarily human. One's clear zone of expression pertains to one's body, and that which exceeds it and remains dark and obscure is the shadow of other monads possessing their own clear zones, all of which converge upon the same world in the process of perpetual becoming (van Tuinen 2021). Another term for this 'truth of the relative' is perspectivism. The doctrine of Radical Perspectivism performs the *salto vitale*: it is not the subject that has a point of view, but the reverse (Deleuze 1980). Subjectification thus operates through subtractive and creative framing. Once we move from interpreting (hermeneutics) to experimenting (heuristics), subjects become effects of affects. Points of view are continuously individuating, and the variety increases as we move from the inorganic (geo) and organic (zoe) to the alloplastic (techno) strata. However, these should not be considered as chronological stages, as this would amount to some 'ridiculous cosmic evolutionism' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 49). Not surprisingly, given his ecological disposition, Gibson's three major concepts map onto Peirce's triad: the ambient optic array (AOA), the occluding edge (OE) and affordance.

Ambient optic array

With the concept of AOA, Gibson establishes a key prerequisite for his theory of perception, which is unmediated and thus more-than-human. As the term suggests, there exists a distributed, ambient potential for perception that may or may not be tapped into. The intensity and structure of light at every potential point of view are temporary resolutions of multiple reverberations in the medium. AOA is not a mental snapshot but a real composition of relations of differential forces. Under ordinary circumstances, their back-and-forth becomes stable enough to

reveal the layout of the surrounding surfaces. Life can be said to occur across and depend on surfaces and is vastly ignorant of the so-called substances. The notion of 'environ-mentality' signifies a post-Darwinian theory of sensibility, where the point of view itself evolves as a result of the active redistribution of the sensible, to use Jacques Rancière's formulation (Rancière 2004). It is essential to emphasize that the ambient array need not be limited to the visual mode. Gibson was strategically reductionist and fully aware of the potential for generalization of the concept to include other modalities, such as olfactory, auditory, gustatory, haptic and so on.

In any case, optical information is 'picked up' rather than processed. It involves the concurrent registration of both change and persistence (difference and repetition) in the flow of structured stimulation. Perceptual systems resonate to environmental structure without incorporating physical properties of stimulus 'input'. Once we replace the theory of physical causality with the theory of asignifying semiotics, nothing crosses the environment-body boundary. There is no place for the homunculus who supposedly gathers evidence in the context of the Cartesian Theatre, 'even after its ghostly dualism has been denounced and exorcized' (Dennet 1991: 107). Information is available in the ambient energy flux rather than as signals in a bundle of nerve fibres, and it consists of invariants rather than forms. This means that the existential niche operates at a different order of analysis than the world of traditional physics. In contrast to the Cartesian-Newtonian universe, where meaning is excluded from the world by definition, the environment is axiological through and through. In the Nietzschean tenor, the word 'value' has no antonym, especially not in the word 'fact'.

Occluding edge

One of Gibson's most underrated concepts is occlusion, which is connected to Peircean Secondness in that it relates to continuous modification and 'struggle'. If the AOA is the foundation of affect theory, then the OE may be considered its ground. That which is temporarily concealed and that which is equally temporarily revealed are bound together by the most ephemeral and crucially reversible component – occlusion. This is a convincing example of the logic of the included middle, as OE literally 'middles'. In contrast to the scientific 'if-then' seeking universal concepts, we have here a speculative pragmatist tinkering based on the 'what-if' drift. The movement in the latter should not be mistaken for translation in a pre-established isotropic absolute space (space as a container). The extensive space with its denumerable dimensionality is a derivative of the directional topological modulations. Radical empiricism holds that the relation – in this case, occlusion as the locus of transformation – is not only real, but it is also directly perceived.

What is perceived cannot be thought of as analogous to a static image or form (the fallacy of retinalism). The retina registers invariants of structure, rather than points of an image. Gibson notes that images are not even necessary for perception or thought. This fact is clearly demonstrated by the perception of occlusion, where one is aware of something in the environment yet has no qualitative content of 'being occluded'. Action (movement executed) and perception (movement

received) cannot be thought of in isolation. What holds them together is the singular concept of Secondness, where the singular is opposed to the universal because each occlusion is structurally different yet operationally isomorphic. We perceive in order to act, and act in order to perceive. But who is this 'we'?

Affordance

Enter Thirdness. Before we proceed, it is important to emphasize that the triad of Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness is irreducible and non-chronological. Thirdness is neither connective nor disjunctive, but rather conjunctive. Earlier, we defined affect as shorthand for the capacity to affect and be affected, bringing it in close proximity to the concept of affordance. According to Gibson, affordance is neither objective nor subjective. Embodying the logic of the included middle, it is perhaps both, as two surfaces of a single topological interval. Peirce connects Thirdness to the interpretant's capacity to relate feeling and acting through learning, but the emergent-yet-constructed interpretant is not antecedent, and the Simondonian formula fully applies: the individuation of knowledge equals the knowledge of individuation.

Individuation takes place within the fourth milieu according to Simondon's framework, with the other three milieus being the interior, the exterior and the membrane between the two. In this process, the associated milieu itself undergoes individuation (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 51). The 'larval subject' consumes different affective states that augment or diminish a body's powers of existence. Crucially, learning increases the capacity to affect and be affected. It is at this point that one may contemplate the concomitant existence of an 'I', as hinted at above, while experiencing joy or sadness in Spinozian terms as one's own. Given that the passive 'self' and the active 'I' never fully coincide in an open system, we may follow Bergson's nomenclature and posit the larval subject as a 'centre of indetermination' (Bergson 2004). If there were such a thing as a centre of determination, the different 'self' would collapse into the repeated 'I'. Drawing on Deleuze's three passive syntheses of time, we can relate Thirdness to futurity and fabulation, which evokes 'a people' that is irreducible to the existing population (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 345). If AOA is about the present as the foundation, and OE is about the (pure) past as the ground, then affordance/affect is about the constituting cut that separates the movement received from the movement executed. As every 'identity' is internally fissured by multiplicity, the role of affect is to open the present onto the future, onto contingency ('grace').

Transindividuation

Simondon (2020) posits the existence of different modes of individuation, including physical, vital, psychical and psycho-social, each with specific capacities for handling information, which is defined as a 'difference that makes a difference' (Bateson 1979: 228). These modes can be differentiated based on the degree of mnemonic detachability, with epigenetic memory being more exo-somatized and

possessing a greater capacity to evolve alongside and in addition to the genetic line. Unlike its organic counterpart, which is transmitted through filiation, epigenetic memory is rhizomatic and conjures up alliances that cut across engrained categorizations in a 'trans-spatial' fashion through 'static genesis'. In this view, time is no longer just a measurement of movement. Static genesis, as opposed to dynamic genesis, starts from virtuality and may engender 'aberrant nuptials', such as the rider-stirrup-horse assemblage, which runs across all three strata mentioned above (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 90). The emergent 'machinic phylum' effectively reverses the subordination of time to movement.

The accumulation of multiple epigenetics can lead to the emergence of a new form of memory called epi-phylo-genetic memory. This new form of memory can give rise to a collective memory that opens up new collective affects, ultimately leading to the creation of an epoch (Stiegler 2019, ch. 2). Architecture and the built environment are examples of transgenerational tertiary memory, where they capture forces rather than just representing or imitating nature. Psychic individuation pertains to individualization, whereas epiphylogenetic memory, due to its 'autonomy', becomes a significant vehicle of transindividuation. In other words, epiphylogenetic memory facilitates the creation (fabulation) of both the non-originary and non-phenomenological 'I' and the non-socio-deterministic 'we' simultaneously. Affect, in this context, is not personal but rather a would-be-affection dwelling in the sensory-motor interval, just as the transindividual occupies the caesura between reactions and actions.

We cannot take the subject as a given (substance) and instead must engage in onto-cartography to understand how the given is given (mode). Every time we encounter a generalization, it is necessary to map its formal consistency and the operation of power that enables it to pretend to universality. Mapping, in this sense, differs from tracing because it operates on the level of tendencies, opening a way to intuit long-term capacities. It constitutes an apprenticeship in priming, a complex existential posture that prepares for the possibility of both non-conscious awareness and conscious elaboration (O'Regan and Noë 2001). One must be affectively attuned to the event in its singularities. Simply being 'woke' is insufficient, as re-acting is just a contrary way of being constrained by what one is reacting against. In contrast to politics as 'power-over' (*potestas*), acting politically does not capture powers of existence but becomes their autonomous expression, which is participatory, i.e. dynamically entangled with the outside.

As Massumi emphasizes, affect is essential for experiencing the political as 'power-to' (*potentia*), but this does not mean that it is a purely personal experience (Massumi 2017). To make the political personal would be to prioritize the subject over affect. Subjectification is machinic, and individuation is a genuine creation where asymmetry is preserved because the actual never fully exhausts the virtual. Therefore, the subject is but an asymptotic limit, just like the other two transcendent illusions of 'world' and 'god'. The subject is not the cause but an effect of affect, defined as the non-human (or more-than-human) becoming of the human. Quentin Meillassoux (2007) distinguishes between active and reactive subjects in relation to their associated milieu. The active subject gradually increases the porosity of the membrane that regulates transitions between the

interior and exterior, past, and future, while the reactive subject eventually isolates itself from the world.

It is crucial to determine the appropriate level of granularity to avoid the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. While ‘politically minded’ architecture theorists prioritize the molar scale and a programmatic approach, affect theory calls for descending to the molecular level, where singularities are teased out through lived abstraction as a function of variation. These two approaches are fundamentally different. The former is characterized by messianic moralism, exemplified by Henri Lefebvre’s advocacy for the ‘right to the city’ (Lefebvre 2000). On the other hand, the latter perspective suggests that non-unitary subjects are fuelled by rhizomes, not solely by reason (Braidotti 2021). To paraphrase Jean-Luc Godard, the objective is not to create a just city but to just create a city. As Deleuze explains:

The just ideas are always those that conform to accepted meanings or established precepts, they’re always ideas that confirm something, even if it’s something in the future, even if it’s the future of the revolution. While ‘just ideas’ is a becoming-present, a stammering of ideas, and can only be expressed in the form of questions that tend to confound any answers.

(Deleuze 1995: 38–9)

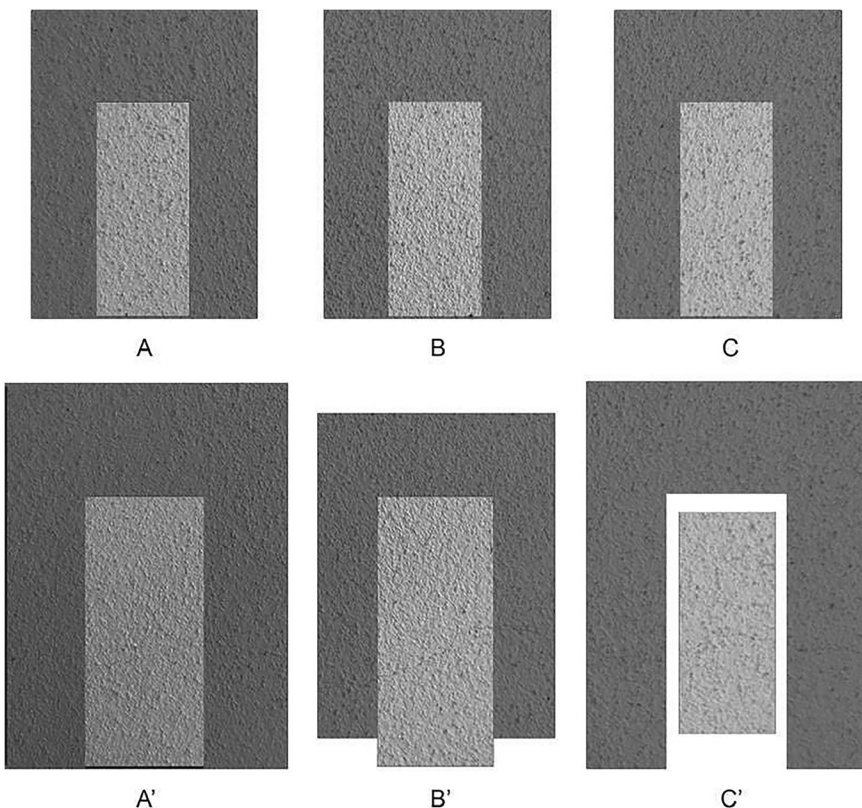


Figure 5.1 Occlusion as a higher-order invariant. Based on ‘Perception: The Ecological Approach’ (Turvey 2003).

Conclusion: Mauss' triad

The chapter concludes with a third triadic diagram featuring what Marcel Mauss (1966) referred to as the gift-exchange system involving giving, receiving and returning in his *Gift Economy* (Spuybroek 2020). If the AOA is given as two juxtaposed patterns, the OE will be rendered sensible or received through self-induced optical flow, and the returning will comprise augmenting or diminishing powers of action via affordance/affect. This last part offers a tangible example of a pedagogy of the senses that demonstrates the mutual reciprocity of the Gibsonian triad. The reciprocal but asymmetrical determination of giving/feeling, receiving/action, and returning/learning is what causes the ratcheting effect (Figure 5.2).

Consider the three seemingly identical AOAs pictured in Figure 5.1 as two surfaces textured as they would usually appear in the environment (Turvey 2003). Every forward locomotion of a point of view (PoV) will inevitably produce a looming effect. The self-induced optical flow will reveal a continuous transformation of patterns both within and outside the OE. The resultant speeds and slownesses catalyse affect, rendering indiscernible the ontopower of the flow

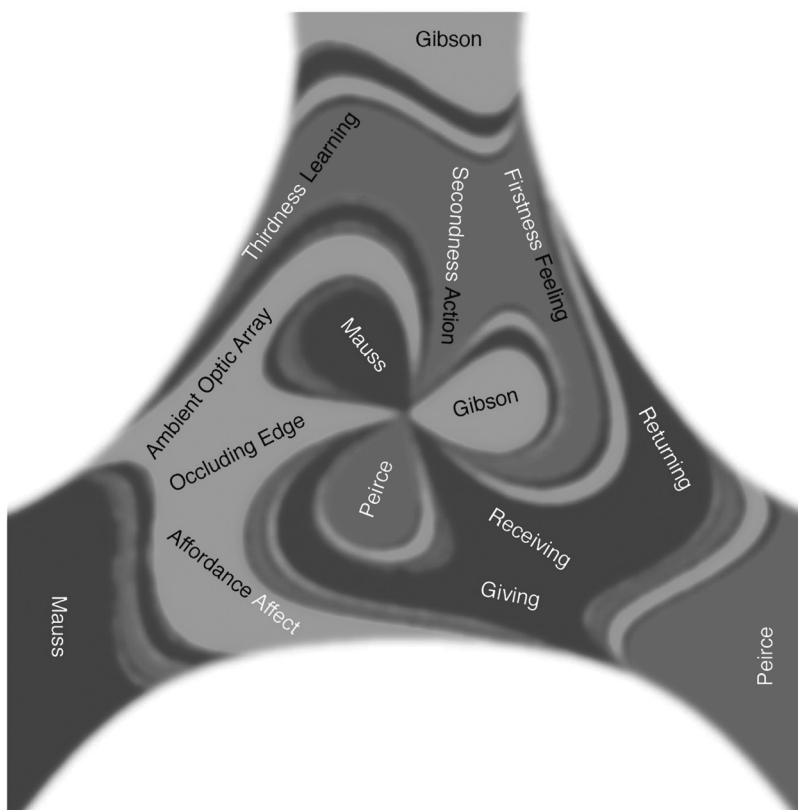


Figure 5.2 Triple triadic diagram: Peirce, Gibson and Mauss. Created by author.

and the genetic PoV. This is the point where nomadology meets monadology. It is less a question of extending a monad's clarified region than of developing its power of action through speculative pragmatist knowledge whose definitive characteristic is selectivity or subtractive operation of vital framing that ignores anything that is not of interest.

Contrary to sedentary distribution by a central authority, nomadic distribution is self-generated. Our frame of reference is N-1, which means that we do not encapsulate the event by ascending to an extra dimension that provides an overview (N+1), but rather descend to the topological surface where the doer and the deed are not separated (Nietzsche [1887] 2007: 26). To illustrate this point, let's revisit our previous example. If the rate of change of the central and peripheral patterns is the same, then the surfaces are flush or co-planar. If the rate of change of the central pattern is faster, it represents a protruding obstacle. On the other hand, if the rate of change of the peripheral pattern is faster, it signifies a recessed opening that affords 'walk-through-ability' in an asignifying manner. Affordances are only ever pharmacological, which means that the ability to walk through may be a poison or a remedy, depending on what awaits on the other side. Technically, this is a question of the in(com)possibility of the assemblage. What a body can do is determined ecologically, and it becomes a question of dosage, of how much is endured before reaching a point of bifurcation, from 'walk-through-ability' to 'reach-through-ability', 'see-through-ability', 'hear-through-ability' and so on. Ultimately, it becomes a question of the permeability of Simondonian membrane.

Undoubtedly, it would be easier to explain the difference between the three affordances by referring to an established code, such as a 'door'. However, we should not submit to the dominance of linguistic signifiers. In the words of Guattari, 'where does the idea that the socius is reducible to the facts of language, and that these facts are in turn reducible to linearizable and "digitalizable" signifying chains, come from?' (Guattari 1996: 111). No signification is determined in advance. The meaning of affordance is not predetermined by resemblance or denotation. It does not derive its meaning from external reality, nor does it represent the psychological state of the subject's mind or the logical essence of the concept (the 'door in itself', as perceived by the mind). Instead, it is produced immanently through a relation that generates its terms.

To effectively escape overcoding, it is essential to focus on affect and avoid conflating relation with interaction. As Robin Evans asserted, 'drawing is not writing, and architecture does not speak' (Evans 1995, xxxvi). Affects are non-linguistic, extra-propositional and unyoked from discourse. More recently, Shannon Mattern (2021) warned that a city is not a computer either. Architecture does not signify, at least not unequivocally. It enunciates and does so collectively. Deleuze and Guattari insist that what we are missing is certainly not communication but resistance to platitudes. Therefore, we should avoid subsuming all sorts of things under a universal concept because such concepts tend to be indifferent to what is actually happening. Conversely, singular concepts are always related to the variables that determine their mutation.

The secret of transcendental empiricism (another apparent oxymoron) lies in plasticity. A constructivist relates the One and the Many in a way that makes

monism and pluralism no longer mutually exclusive. It is not about the subjective conditions of generic experience, as phenomenology suggests, but about the actual genesis of everything, including points of view and knowledge. Everything begins with the sensible, but thought must go beyond the sensible to the potential for difference that enables both sentience and sapience (Colebrook 2009: 29). The subject is subtracted from experience, viewed as a collective achievement. It is made up of 'nothing but a [contingently obligatory] confluence and configuration of care, food, money, ideas, prohibitions, and capacities from broader social formations that [it] ingested in particular places' (Saldanha 2017: 126). This is what is meant by the 'pedagogy of the senses', and why the concept of affordance is essential if we want to live towards the future transindividually, i.e. in excess of the naval-gazing personhood (Massumi 2017).

There is no such thing as a private environment. While memories may feel individual, they are retained collectively, forming transgenerational knowledge that stabilizes the conditions of life (Stiegler 2018). The associated milieu not only allows experiences to be sustained through time, but it also makes them increasingly complex, impacting the production of desire as a real ontogenesis, rather than an imaginary force based on lack (Deleuze and Guattari 2008: 35). Perception is individuation and the 'psychic' image should not be seen in opposition to 'physical' movement. Instead, the conditions of real experience are determined at the nexus where the being of the sensible reveals itself in affect, while at the same time affordance appears as experimentation (Deleuze 1994: 68).

A monad, as a point of view, is defined by its perceptions and appetitions, i.e. by experience and desire. When we understand our faculties as being social, not just psychic, we see that affordance – as the evaluation of power – is not simply a matter of identifying objects and uses. Instead, it becomes a bearer of non-Darwinian selection processes, where techno-diversity is just as important biodiversity (Hui 2020). Bernard Stiegler's cautionary idea of the 'proletarianization of the senses' highlights the danger of a single industry dominating the production of affect, which can have a profound impact on our perception and desires (Stiegler 2017; Adorno 1991). To counteract this, Deleuze and Guattari argue for a focus on difference which they consider as originary. If the Leibnizian *cogitata* comes prior to the Cartesian *cogito*, then difference, not opposition, is thought before we even think of ourselves as the subject of that thinking (Cache 2011: 31). In this context, architecture is not simply a static background against which life takes place, but becomes actively explicated, complicated and implicated in the very capacities of bodies. It is no wonder that Deleuze and Guattari conclude that art begins not with flesh, but with the house (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 186).

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