

ELEVEN

Possessive Subjects

A Speculative Interpretation of Nonhumans

Didier Debaise

Translated by Thomas Jellis

Whitehead's philosophy can be renewed in the context of a reconstruction of the thought of the subject. This is the hypothesis to which I would like to give sense by starting with a proposition: "apart from the experiences of subjects there is nothing, nothing, nothing, bare nothingness" (*PR*, 167).¹ If we make an immediate abstraction of the repetitive form that gives it a particular status, this proposition at first seems to smoothly extend some of the principal events of contemporary philosophy. Let us limit ourselves to one of the major references constituting the interior space from which Whitehead constructs his own philosophy, the philosophy of Bergson. Had he not already affirmed, two decades before Whitehead, that the most certain point of an investigation of nature should necessarily go by the analysis of a privileged perspective—namely, our own? The first phrases of *Creative Evolution* go in this direction: the "existence of which we are most assured and which we know best is unquestionably our own, for of every other object we have notions which may be considered external and superficial, whereas, of ourselves, our perception is internal and profound."²

Whitehead himself, a few years before his proposition, affirmed in his book *The Concept of Nature*, without apparent reservation, that the notion of nature should be entirely reconstructed on the basis of a perceptive, human experience. To the question "What is nature?" Whitehead therefore proposed a definition that recentered the concept on our perception: "Nature is that which we observe in perception through the senses. In this sense-perception we are aware of something which is not a thought and which is self-contained for thought" (*CN*, 3). We have, with sense perception, a vague

awareness of something that exceeds our thought and does not depend upon it. What we experience is the existence of events that indicate others more or less confusedly: we perceive a room indicating the existence of a building of which it is a part and, more vaguely, the existence of other buildings, other events. The objects of our perception are sections, blocks, bits, cut-outs, and partial events that point toward others with which they are linked. In the end, it is all a complex system of events that is indicated in our immediate perception, events that are at once relative to these and independent, as they maintain direct relations with each other. In the end, “the immediate fact for awareness is the whole occurrence of nature” (CN, 14).

But why then does Whitehead insist so strongly, several years later, on asserting that beyond subjective experience there is *nothing*? Why, if this proposition only extends to previous axes of contemporary philosophy, does Whitehead announce this as a point of bifurcation, the sign of a new orientation or a new philosophical scene? Can we see only the simple radicalization of an already started trajectory in which this proposition came to insert itself? On the contrary, it seems to me that by simply holding on to what is said, in the literality of this proposition, we cannot maintain the idea of continuity. This is because Whitehead does not limit himself to affirming the central position of the subject or of sense-consciousness in the experience of nature; he goes much further by adopting a position on nature in general. Alongside Bergson and his previous works, there is certainly a comparable extension, an “effort to go beyond the human state,”³ in a passage on which Gilles Deleuze comments by affirming that this consists of opening “up to the inhuman and the superhuman (durations which are inferior or superior to our own), to go beyond the human condition: This is the meaning of philosophy.”⁴ However, one way or another, this experience of the infra- and the suprahuman should, according to Bergson, necessarily pass through this mixed situation of the human as the bearer of dimensions that go beyond it in the both directions. Whitehead’s proposition is by contrast, as I wish to show, directly ontological, or more precisely, according to his own terms, cosmological. This is not an affirmation that we cannot go beyond our own experience as subjects, but the adoption of a position on the reality of nature as such.

The hypothesis that I wish to defend here, as it seems to actualize Whitehead’s philosophy and rejoin its linked tendencies to a pluralist vision of nature, is that the question of the subject acquires a novel dimension by becoming an ontological question, a question of nature itself, independently of a perceiving, exclusively human, subject. Put simply, I think that

Whitehead's proposition can be taken up as part of an investigation into nonhuman subjects of nature, or what I would call more generally, the "subjects of nature." Ultimately, the question to which this work gives meaning could be formulated in the following way: what is a nonanthropological subject?⁵

A World of Possessions

Therefore, the first task of a metaphysics of subjects consists in problematizing approaches that would prioritize human beings. For this, one needs to rethink the notion by provisionally bracketing out all the categories that tend to obfuscate its current usage, and have overdetermined the meaning. The question one needs to pose in the framework of a metaphysical restoration is thus: Does a notion of the subject preexist its attachment to categories such as intentionality, consciousness, or representation? What would be the main components and their number? If the problem is effectively formulated by Whitehead, the question remains without an unequivocal answer from him. We can simply try to pick up the heterogeneous lines of conceptual developments that cross his philosophy and meet where the notion of the subject could acquire its own consistency. By first approximation, I would propose to define the Whiteheadian subject as a beam of "feelings." Here, "feeling" alludes to notions such as "sensation," the "sentiment of something," the "impression," a "vague conscience," "emotions," but also the verb to sense or, more precisely, "sentient being." Whitehead attributes it to all the forms of subjective experience in nature. In this way, for example,

a jellyfish advances and withdraws, and in so doing, exhibits some perception of causal relationship with the world beyond itself; a plant grows downwards to the damp earth, and upwards towards the light. There is thus some direct reason for attributing dim, slow feelings of casual nexus, although we have no reason for any ascription of the definite percepts. (*PR*, 176–77)

We can inscribe the project of a general theory of feelings in an ongoing polemic against Kantian philosophy:

The philosophy of organism aspires to construct a critique of pure feeling, in the philosophical position in which Kant put his *Critique of Pure Reason*. This should also supersede the remaining Critiques required in the Kantian philosophy. Thus in the organic philosophy Kant's "Transcendental Aesthetic" becomes a distorted fragment of what should have been his main topic. The datum

includes its own interconnections, and the first stage of the process of feeling is the reception into the responsive conformity of feeling whereby the datum, which is mere potentiality, becomes the individualized basis for a complex unity of realization. (*PR*, 113)

The notion of feeling would thus become the first term of a new “aesthetic”⁶ and, with it, as the subject is nothing more than a multiplicity of feelings, an “aesthetic” redefinition of subjects of nature. Whitehead is rather elusive as to this rethinking [*reprise*] of the aesthetic. However, it seems possible to me to extend the elements given in the preceding quotation and to imagine the limits that Whitehead would express on the aesthetic project, in the Kantian sense, and with it, most of its future inheritance. Therefore, the main limit would be that while the aesthetic continues to be thought within a framework of a theory of faculties, as pointing to one among several, it is the “capacity (receptivity) to obtain representation through the way in which we are affected by objects.”⁷ Indeed, the aesthetic tends to designate a subject’s modes of receptivity, the manner in which it is affected by sensory data [*les donnés des sens*]. When we limit the aesthetic by inscribing it within a human faculty, we risk subtracting all aesthetic dimensions that are immanent to it, as if nature was not already populated by a multiplicity of ways of being affected, of feeling, of hoping, or of fearing. This complex operation by which nature is emptied of all its aesthetic qualities—or, in a less radical reading, made opaque to its aesthetic dimensions, to then attribute these to a perceiving subject that would project them beyond itself—is an expression of what Whitehead calls the “bifurcation of nature.” It is in a different context, notably in the analysis of the emergence of the modern sciences, that Whitehead develops this critique of the bifurcation of nature, but it could also very well be applied here in the context of the limitations of the aesthetic:

Another way of phrasing this theory which I am arguing against is to bifurcate nature into two divisions, namely into the nature apprehended in awareness and the nature which is the cause of awareness. The nature which is in fact apprehended in awareness holds within it the greenness of the trees, the song of the birds, the warmth of the sun, the hardness of the chairs, and the feel of the velvet. The nature which is the cause of awareness is the conjectured system of molecules and electrons which so affects the mind as to produce the awareness of apparent nature. (*CN*, 30–31)

Against this bifurcation between “real nature” and “apparent nature,” Whitehead affirms that “the red glow of the sunset should be as much part

of nature as are the molecules and electric waves” (CN, 29). The “aesthetic” must not be displaced from the way in which nature is experienced, but must be replaced as a factor of existence. It is no exaggeration to affirm that for Whitehead it becomes “ontological.” All beings should have their own aesthetic, a singular way in which they are affected by nature, a particular form of expression. It is a theory of expressive modes in nature that Whitehead, implicitly, aims at by attempting to generalize the aesthetic, to displace it from the oppositional space between nature and the perceiving subject, in order to make it the first term of the very existence of nature. Each “fact” is already inside, at the center of an aesthetic, already animated by “interconnections,” “conformities” to other experiences, already profoundly relational.⁸

The question that I was initially posing—“what is a nonanthropological subject?”—has transformed into a new question, highlighting the constitutive operation of such a subject. It becomes instead: What is a feeling? It is the notion of feeling that we must now specify. By taking this in its most habitual form, it will thus be possible to extract the more ontological dimensions. What do we wish to mean when we say, for example, that an animal senses a danger that suddenly disturbs its milieu or when we have the feeling that a situation could change, could become dangerous or enjoyable? Is it the same experience as that of a body affected by diverse sensory impressions expressing that it feels its milieu? In its most general form, the feeling means at once the fact that the data of the world are “integrated,” taken into account, and that the data are under a particular mode. If a particular milieu becomes disturbing, it is because the data that constitute it have become partially disturbing in the perspective of an experience that is in the making. In the same way, if the body feels its environment, it is across sense organs that integrate the facts under a particular form, according to a singular filter: it is through the eye that things are seen, and it is with the hand that tactile sensations are experienced.⁹ Other senses are equivalent to other ways of polarizing the data of the world.¹⁰

In one sense, all the experiences express, according to an extremely wide variety of processes of integration or capture: nutrition, tactile impressions, sight, or even predation. Call it what you will, a feeling is above all a capture, a particular way of possessing,¹¹ an activity through which something “appropriates the datum so as to make it its own” (PR, 164). We can go further in taking from the preceding examples the ontological characteristics that are implicated therein, by affirming that all centers of experience are the capture of immediate data that form the environment, and, step by step, the universe in its totality. What the alert animal senses is not a particular

datum that would confirm the reasons for a danger; it is the entire universe under the modality of danger; everything becomes expressive of danger. In its ontological form, we would therefore say that each feeling is the totality of the universe that is felt: the aesthetic becomes cosmological. Whitehead here extends the project of a monadology, where monads are all centers of experience, of perspectives, and are composed of all the others. Or as Leibniz puts it, “every substance is like a complete world and like a mirror of God or of the whole universe, which one expresses in its own way, somewhat as the same city is variously represented depending upon the different positions from which it is viewed.”¹² Thus the traces of all events are found in each individual subject, and “when we consider carefully the connection of things, we can say that from all time in Alexander’s soul there are vestiges of everything that has happened to him.”¹³

By affirming that the history of the universe, without exception, is felt, that each event, as insignificant as it may be at first, leaves a trace that marks all the others, this theory of feeling seems to go very far. Yet, despite this unprecedented enlargement, it is not sufficient for Whitehead. Strangely, this still overly limits feeling. To say that all the universe is felt, that is to say captured or possessed, according to a perspective, is not enough. For Whitehead it is missing a fundamental dimension: the trace of all the possibilities that accompany a feeling.

A feeling bears on itself the scars of its birth; it recollects as a subjective emotion its struggle for existence; it retains the impress of what it might have been, but is not. It is for this reason that what an actual entity has avoided as a datum for feeling may yet be an important part of its equipment. The actual cannot be reduced to mere matter of fact in divorce from the potential. (*PR*, 226–27)

This is what Peirce calls in his “*Pragmatism*,” a “would be,”¹⁴ a possibility. What could have been, the choices made and the selections that took place, define a subject as much as what it actually is. The feeling carries with it all the “would bes,” the eventualities that the subject had to dismiss in its actual existence, all the alternatives that were presented to it. The fact that Caesar may not have crossed the Rubicon—that another world than the one that we have inherited could have existed, linked to this act that it excluded—gives all its importance and its singular form to the fact that he did actually cross it. The hesitation within a particular action shows that possibles are envisaged, all of which form trajectories of existences left in suspense to the benefit of one of them. If they are actually excluded, they remain no less crucial to the acts performed. In this way, all posi-

tive feeling, all capture, is permanently accompanied by a constellation of feelings of avoidance, of refusal, of rejection of the possible that amplify their importance. This is what Whitehead means when he writes that the “actual cannot be reduced to mere matter of fact in divorce from the potential” (*PR*, 227).

However, the importance of these feelings of the possibilities that are not actualized should not be exaggerated. If the possible worlds, felt, attached to each of our actions, to each feeling, are constitutive of these, they would be only pure abstraction, undone of all real inscription, if they were not directly linked and engaged in the actions-in-act, in the making. The eventuality, the hesitation when faced with a choice and the traces left behind by the rejection of a possibility, are only real through the acts that actually happen. There is certainly a primacy in the experience, a primacy that we could take as ontological, of effective feelings on the possible, of the act on power. This point seems to me to be fundamental as it marks Whitehead’s refusal of all evaluation of the possibles released from their real action; what interests him are the possibles crystalized in the acts, incarnated in actual subjects. Whitehead provides a historical example: the battle of Waterloo.

This battle resulted in the defeat of Napoleon, and in a constitution of our actual world grounded upon that defeat. But the abstract notions, expressing the possibilities of another course of history which would have followed upon his victory, are relevant to the facts which actually happened. We may not think it of practical importance that imaginative historians should dwell upon such hypothetical alternatives. But we confess their relevance in thinking about them at all, even to the extent of dismissing them. (*PR*, 185)

In a more or less intense way, according to the situations in which we are engaged in our actual world, we inherit the possibilities linked to another course of history than that of Napoleon’s defeat. All feeling relative to that event carries with it the trace of the fact that it may not have taken place, and that eventuality does not float in an ethereal world of abstractions but is inscribed, almost corporeally, in feeling.

Modes of Existence of Subjects

So what exactly is the relation between feelings and the subject? If the aesthetic, and with it the question of an ontology of feeling, becomes paramount and extends to all aspects of nature, the fact remains that there

is indeed, at one time or another, a “subject” that feels. This raises the question of primacy: Is it the subject, now designating all centers of experience and no longer only the anthropological subject, which we can say feels, experiences, or is affected by the world? Or, by contrast, do we have to postulate that feelings are primarily without subject? To answer this, Whitehead distinguishes between two meanings of the word “subject,”¹⁵ which are drawn from two distinct traditions of the history of philosophy and which he tries to reunify:¹⁶ the subject can be thought either as *subjectum*, or as *superjacio*. Let us start with the first meaning. The subject as “*subjectum*” highlights notions such as “to be placed below,” “to be put beneath something.” If we link such a meaning to the question of feelings, then we can say that the subject, in this first form, appears as the “support” or the “base” for feeling, at once set back, placed behind, and what gives them sense. Everything happens as if the subject was in complete possession of “its” feelings, which would be, with more or less force, like accidents affecting the identity or expressing superficial aspects. If this vision of a possessive subject of its feelings has imposed itself, especially in modern philosophy, it is because it effectively manifested certain fundamental traits of the experience. It expressed the sentiment that all experience is polarized, oriented toward a subject that is at the center and from which emanate expressive qualities: affective tonalities, sounds, colors, tactile sensations, and so on. To the extent that these feelings seem to indicate a subject toward which they tend, the subject can indeed appear as the support from which feelings originate.

How, then, does Whitehead manage to take on as his own this first vision of the subject? Quite simply, by inverting the order of causes. This impression of a support or a foundation for feelings, the sense that there is a subject from which feelings seem to derive—these common and indisputable impressions to which philosophies of the subject have tried to give a theoretical basis—are the effect of a process and not its end. Whitehead provides an example: “Descartes in his own philosophy conceives the thinker as creating the occasional thought. The philosophy of organism inverts the order, and conceives the thought as a constituent operation in the creation of the occasional thinker. The thinker is the final end whereby there is the thought” (*PR*, 151). Most of the time, thought by no means requires that we connect it to any subject, but if, in retrospect, we attempt to chart the stages of development of these thoughts, we would add the subject that actually derives from the thought. In this way, the subject is understood as being in full possession of itself and, by derivation, of its feeling (or, as Whitehead would say, of its thoughts); seemingly beneath its

affections and supporting them, the subject must not be considered as a first reality but on the contrary as the retroactive term of a “series of experiences,”¹⁷ the moment where this becomes fully itself, acquiring its own fullness. The subject appears as the moment where the feelings are crystalizing in a unified experience, a complex of feeling having become a singular experience.

We can very easily generalize this inversion and redeploy it to all centers of experience in nature: an animal, for example, is a multiplicity of centers of experience, which are “the various parts of its body” (*MT*, 23) with their feelings, their particular ways of being affected and of putting themselves in relation with the wider environment of their experience. Yet these multiple centers of experience, which are the parts of its body, are no less related to each other as “one centre of experience” (*MT*, 23) that enables communication within this multiplicity of corporeal centers and forms a complex unity, living and manifesting itself as *this* sentient animal. Each center of experience of its body is a subject, in the sense that it expresses a plurality of feelings situated in one point of experience, but the ensemble of these “centres of experience,” as much as they converge towards a superior unity, also form a subject that is the animal as a complex unity of experiences. Such a superior unity is not always required; for example, “in the case of vegetables, we find bodily organizations which decisively lack any one centre of experience with a higher complexity either of expressions received or in-born data” (*MT*, 24). Certainly we find a multiplicity of small centers of experience, but it is not necessary that these are subordinated to a superior center. As Whitehead puts it, a “vegetable is a democracy; an animal is dominated by one, or more centers of experience. But such domination is limited, very strictly limited. The expressions of the central leader are relevant to that leader’s reception of data from the body” (*MT*, 24). Thus, this vision of the subject as “subjectum” reflects an important part of the experience of feelings but as an effect (the final phase) of their consolidation,¹⁸ the final term of a process where the feelings, step by step, condense [*se densifiant*] into a unified experience, an experience of self: *this* part of a body, *this* animal, *this* thinker.

Yet by itself, this understanding of the subject is, even if redeployed within a new logic of its relation to feelings, insufficient. It does not dispense with the argument that although we can go as far as we wish in displacing the reemergence of the subject, putting it at the beginning or at the end, it still remains that at one moment or another, a subject is constituted and distinguishes itself from its feelings. How can we avoid the vicious circle implied by the fact that the subject, even taken to its most minimal

form, can be explained only by something that would already be subjective? It is here that Whitehead takes another meaning of the notion of subject, affiliated with another tradition: the subject as “superjacio.” We can translate this with a series of expressions such as “throw over,” “throw towards,” but also “to exceed” or “to cross.” It is a subject of which we can say that it is in some ways in advance of itself, virtually already there in each feeling. It is less a fully realized subject than a tendency: the “aim is at that complex of feeling which is at the enjoyment of those data in that way” (*MT*, 152). Everything is in the way, in the manner or mode: the way in which experience is made, the way in which something is felt, the way of experiencing. This constitutes the precision of the aesthetic that I was describing earlier: each center of experience is characterized by its own way, a tonality that distinguishes it from all the others.¹⁹ There is no need to postulate an autonomous subject and possessor of its experiences to see that already the thoughts, the sensory impressions, what Whitehead also calls visceral experience, are common to most living things, putting to work as many singular ways of being related to data as obtained from their environments. This way is the aim, the orientation in which what is felt is engaged or mobilized. Therefore, we would say that “feelings are inseparable from the end at which they aim; and this end is the feeler. The feelings aim at the feeler, as their final cause” (*PR*, 222).

The two meanings of the term subject—*subjectum* and *superjacio*—are not in opposition; on the contrary, they can be taken together in a renewed thought of subjects detached from all exclusively anthropological inscription. If indeed we pose the question by beginning from feelings, it becomes evident that there are two moments of a feeling to which correspond two subjective phases. First of all, in its initial state, the feeling tends to merge with what is felt, that is to say the facts, sensations, ideas, general impressions. However, this immanence of feeling to the facts is already inhabited by a subjective form. In this sense, as much as the feeling is, in this first phase, almost indistinct from that which is felt, the way, the polarization of the facts, is already the expression of a virtual subjectivity (*superjacio*), a style separate from the feeling. It is in terms of the activity of an experience of self, what Whitehead also calls “self-enjoyment,” that the feeling as such, of its own style, emerges. It thus becomes a subject in its own right (*subjectum*) possessor of itself through data from which it comes. As summarized by Gilles Deleuze,

self-enjoyment, marks the way by which the subject is filled with itself and attains a richer and richer private life, when prehension is filled with its own

data. This is a biblical—and, too, a neo-Platonic—notion that English empiricism carried to its highest degree (notably with Samuel Butler). The plant sings of the glory of God, and while being filled all the more with itself it contemplates and intensely contracts the elements whence it proceeds. It feels in this prehension the *self-enjoyment* of its own becoming.²⁰

Conclusion: A Universe of Subjectivities

I have proposed a possible heritage here, by recentering it on the question of feelings and of the implementation of an aesthetic, which would become the initial term of a cosmology, of Whitehead's proposition: apart from the experiences of subjects there is nothing, nothing, nothing, bare nothingness. This proposition indicates a whole program seeking to redefine the modern conception of nature. Nothing obliges us to oscillate perpetually between two conceptions of nature that are combined in a multiplicity of variables more or less near to their original form, with one approach being what Whitehead calls "romantic" and the other "scientific." The first, notably expressed by Shelley and Wordsworth, affirms that "nature cannot be divorced from its aesthetic values, and that these values arise from the cumulation, in some sense, of the brooding presence of the whole on to its various parts" (*SMW*, 87)—that is to say, of the insistence of the universe in each particular case. The second approach affirms that "Nature is a dull affair, soundless, scentless, colourless; merely the hurrying of material, endlessly, meaninglessly" (*SMW*, 54), where the aesthetic and axiological expressions only appear as "psychic additions" (*CN*, 29), simply added by the perceiving mind. This opposition, inherited from the "bifurcation of nature" in operation in the seventeenth century, continues to move without losing any of its efficacy in contemporary thought, and the oppositions between philosophies of the subject and those of nature seem only to redeploy the components of a problem that they never truly succeed in undoing.

Whitehead's gesture consists of not making these "aesthetic values" a supplement added to nature by a perceiving subject, but to make them the most fundamental factors of nature. With Whitehead, the aesthetic becomes the site of all ontology, the plurality of ways of doing, ways of being, capacities to be affected—in a word, the modalities of "feeling" are at the heart of a theory of subjects of nature. We do not have to renew the opposition between "reality" and "perception," between "being" and "aesthetic values," to then try to reunify the terms, as nature can be directly considered as a multiplicity of centers of experience, all directly expressive. Whitehead's philosophy is indeed a

cosmology, and it can be characterized as a universal mannerism [*maniérisme universel*]. Being and the manner of being are indistinguishable; they form the conditions of existence for all subjects, human and nonhuman.

Notes

1. For a very long time, this proposition was ignored by most readers of Whitehead. Indeed, in the French inheritance of his philosophy, there is no mention of it: e.g., see Henri Bergson, *Durée et simultanéité* (Paris: Quadrige, 2009); Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *La nature: Notes, cours du Collège de France* (Paris: Seuil, 1995); Émile Meyerson, *Du cheminement de la pensée* (Paris: Vrin, 2011); Jean Wahl, *Vers le concret. Études d'histoire de la philosophie contemporaine* (Paris: Vrin, 1932); Gilles Deleuze, *Le pli: Leibniz et le Baroque* (Paris: Minuit, 1988). Only recently has Isabelle Stengers, in *Penser avec Whitehead: Une libre et sauvage création de concepts* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002), announced the importance of this proposition for the very first time.

2. Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications Inc., 1998), 1.

3. Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications Inc., 2007), 163.

4. Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York, N.Y.: Zone Books, 1991), 28.

5. I call the “anthropological paradigm” the affirmation that a proposition has legitimacy and consistency if and only if it can be linked, by generalization or analogy, to a human experience. The project of “subjects of nature” aims to break radically with this paradigm. In this sense, I completely agree with Quentin Meillassoux and his critique of correlationism in *Après la finitude* (Paris: Seuil, 2006), 18. However, I think that the question is more general than the relation, as Meillassoux claims, between being and thinking.

6. On this topic, see the excellent book by Steven Shaviro, *Without Criteria: Kant, Whitehead, Deleuze, and Aesthetics* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009).

7. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Marcus Weigelt and Max Muller (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 59.

8. Whitehead develops the ground of a relational ontology through his “principle of relativity,” and in this regard he can be linked to contemporary philosophers who are today objects of rediscovery, such as Gilbert Simondon, *L'individuation à la lumière des notions de forme et d'information* (Paris: Jérôme Millon, 2005) and Gabriel Tarde, *Monadologie et sociologie* (Paris: Les Empêcheurs de penser en rond, 1999).

9. See, for instance: “the *hand* is the *reason* for the projected touch-sensum, the *eye* is the *reason* for the projected sight-sensum” (*PR*, 176).

10. The most patent examples of such a plurality of worlds linked to diverse forms of experience are found in Jakob von Uexküll’s notion of *umwelt* in *Mondes animaux et monde humain* (Paris: Editions Gonthier, 1956).

11. This is one of the main metaphysical propositions of Tarde in *Monadologie et sociologie*. For more, see Bruno Latour, “Gabriel Tarde. La société comme possession,” in *Philosophies des possessions*, ed. Didier Debaise (Dijon: Presses du réel, 2012).

12. Gottfried Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics and Other Essays*, trans. Daniel Garber and Roger Ariew (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Publishing), 9.

13. Ibid., 8.
14. Peirce, "Pragmatism," in *The Essential Peirce*, ed. the Peirce Edition Project (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 2: 410–11.
15. For a more complete analysis of this double meaning of the subject, see Didier Debaise, *Un empirisme spéculatif* (Paris: Vrin, 2006).
16. See Alain De Libera, *Archéologie du sujet* (Paris: Vrin, 2007).
17. On the questions of series and transitions of experiences, see William James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), principally ch. 2, "A World of Pure Experience."
18. This is inspired by the theory of consolidation developed by Eugène Dupréel in "Theorie de la consolidation. Esquisse d'une théorie de la vie d'inspiration sociologique," *Revue de l'institut de sociologie* 3 (1931): 473–530.
19. This theme seems to me to be in a striking proximity to the philosophy of Étienne Souriau and principally what he calls the "sollicitudinary" (*sollicitudinaire*). See on this subject, Souriau, *Avoir une âme. Essai sur les existences virtuelles* (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1938), and Souriau, *Les différents modes d'existence* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2009), as well the magnificent introduction to that work, written by Bruno Latour and Isabelle Stengers and titled "Le Sphinx de l'œurve." Étienne Souriau, *Les différents modes d'existence* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2009), 1–75.
20. Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (London: Continuum, 2006), 89.