Deleuze’s ontological ‘holism’

Hanegraaf: ‘I will argue that holism can be conceived in abstract terms as:

1. based on the possibility of reducing all manifestations to one "ultimate source";
2. based on the universal interrelatedness of everything in the universe;
3. based on a universal dialectic between complementary polarities;
4. based on the analogy of the whole of reality, or of significant subsystems, with organisms.’
(Hanegraaf, 1996, p. 120)

For Deleuze, a version of point 1, 2 and 3 are evident in his ontology:

1. The univocity of being (drawn from Duns Scocus, Spinoza and Nietzsche) or BwO
2. ‘[A] single and same sense throughout all its forms [...] That of which it is said, however, differs; it is said of difference itself [...] Opening is an essential feature of univocity’ (Difference and Repetition (1968), 2004, p. 378) or ‘this body without organs is permeated by unformed, unstable matters, by flows in all directions, by free intensities or nomadic singularities, by mad or transitory particles. (A Thousand Plateaus, (1980), 2004, p. 45)
3. Asymmetrical relation between the virtual and the actual, intensive and extensive the molecular and the molar, the ‘middle’ characterising the rhizome, becoming, multiplicity.
4. There is a radical break with how the ‘organism’ is conceived hence this is not akin to an organicist holism.
References to the ‘rhizome’ in some recent post-Jungian literature

Addison (indirectly – 2009)
Bishop (2008)
Cambray (2017)
Colman (2011)
Henderson (2014)
Rowland (indirectly – 2005/2010)
Holism: possibilities and problems

I fancied I was working along the best scientific lines…only to discover in the end that I had involved myself in a net of reflections which extend far beyond natural science and ramify into the fields of philosophy, theology, comparative religion, and the human sciences in general. (Jung, 1947, p. 421)

What is offered here is a dynamic intertextuality in which movement and growth is possible, but not in the linear triumphant mode of demolishing ‘inferior’ past positions. Rather the net of reflected discourses offers many directional paths, multiple cultural positions, a uroborous of discourse. (Rowland, 2005, p. 92)
And yet Deleuze and Guattari define philosophy as a certain machine that cannot work all by itself; it needs other machines that fit into its apparatus or assemblage and provide it with contents in order to work, in order to produce concepts. The relationship that Deleuze constructs between philosophy and nonphilosophy will work no differently; it is machnic, and consequently our role will be to understand its parts, its functions, and most of all, how it works [...] and the domains of nonphilosophy (art, literature, and cinema) as components of a larger machine that are assembled together in order to work, occasionally to produce something called thinking. (Lambert, 2012, 19-20).
From ‘active’ to ‘passive’ vitalism (or active and passive holism)

Hans Driesch (1867-1941)
Conceived as the property which organises and develops objects imbued with life, Driesch thought of **entelechy** as a substance “handed down from generation to generation” and existing since the beginning of time. In its activity within the individual, however, he named this substance the “psychoid,” or soul-like, again circumscribing his definition with a number of analogies which attempted to exclude traditional philosophical concepts (p. 249)

‘A vitalist strand permeates Jung's entire opus, beginning with his assertion in his *Zofingia Lectures* [1896-1899] as a student that 'a pre-existent vital principle is necessary to explain the world of organic phenomena' (1896, para. 63). His initial representation of ‘the psychoid’ is founded in *Das Psychoid* of the biologist and neo-vitalist Hans Driesch (1903), whose experiments on sea urchins demonstrated teleological aims of the organism towards wholeness.’ (Addison, 2016, p. 567-8)
Bergson’s criticism of Dreisch (1907) in *Creative Evolution* (1859-1941)

But the position of vitalism is rendered very difficult by the fact that, in nature, there is neither purely internal finality nor absolutely distinct individuality. The organised elements composing the individual have themselves a certain individuality, and each will claim its vital principle if the individual pretends to have its own. But, on the other hand, the individual itself is not sufficiently independent, not sufficiently cut off from other things for us to allow it a “vital principle cut off from other things, for us to allow it a “vital principle” of its own. (*Creative Evolution*, pp. 42-3)
The ‘active vitalism’ in post-Jungian embodiment theory (a new ‘organicism’)

Recently Warren Colman, Jungian scholar and analyst, has commented that the autopoietic:

….description gives a very good idea of what phenomenologists mean by intentionality and how it creates meaning by transforming the world as a whole into the world for the organism to whom it has meaning. In this way, the world becomes a meaningful environment—a milieu or Umwelt. This requires no more (and no less) than the emergence of living organisms, which the biologists Maturana and Varela describe as autopoietic systems (Maturana & Varela 1980; 1987). Autopoiesis refers to the necessary features distinguishing a system that is able to define a boundary with the environment (‘organisational closure’), and to maintain that boundary by continually re-creating the difference between itself and everything else. (2015, “Bounded in a Nutshell,” p. 322)
‘In using the term "psychoid" I am aware that it comes into collision with the concept of the same name postulated by Driesch. By "the psychoid" he understands the directing principle, the "reaction determinant," the "prospective potency" of the germinal element. It is "the elemental agent discovered in action," the "entelechy of real acting."


‘If I make use of the term "psychoid" I do so with three reservations: firstly, I use it as an adjective, not as a noun; secondly, no psychic quality in the proper sense of the word is implied, but only a "quasi-psychic" one such as the reflex-processes possess; and thirdly, it is meant to distinguish a category of events from merely vitalistic phenomena on the one hand and from specifically psychic processes on the other. The latter distinction also obliges us to define more closely the nature and extent of the psyche, and of the unconscious psyche in particular’ (ibid.)
'In my previous writings, I have always treated the archetypal phenomena as psychic, because the material to be expounded or investigated was solely concerned with images or ideas. The psychoid nature of the archetype as put forward here does not contradict these earlier formulations; it only means a further degree of conceptual differentiation... Just as the ‘psychic infra-red’, the biological instinctual psyche, gradually passes over into the physiology of the organism and thus merges with its chemical and physical conditions, so the ‘psychic ultra-violet’, the archetype, describes a field which exhibits none of the peculiarities of the physiological and yet, in the last analysis, can no longer be regarded as psychic, although it manifests itself psychically. ("On the Nature of the Psyche," (1946) , paras. 419–420)
Underneath (or behind, or somewhere obscured by) the ‘contemporary’, the ‘modern’, the ‘civilized’, lies the ‘primal’, the ‘primordial’, the ‘archaic’. And sometimes the latter, ‘something that lives and endures beneath the eternal flux’, suddenly intrudes, **rhizome-like**, into the world of the former, just as, in the prologue to *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, it is suggested that the only events of Jung’s life worthy of narration are ‘those when the imperishable world irrupted into this transitory one’ (Jaffe 1963, p. 18). In Bishop, 2008, p. 515

Cf. Deleuze and Guattari

The affect certainly does not undertake a return to origins, as if beneath civilisation we would rediscover, in terms of resemblance, the persistence of a bestial or primitive humanity. It is within our civilisation’s temperate surroundings that equatorial or glacial zones, which avoid the differentiation of genus, sex, orders, and kingdoms, currently function and prosper. It is only a question of ourselves, here and now; but what is animal, vegetable, mineral, or human in us is now indistinct – even though we ourselves will especially acquire distinction. (*What is Philosophy?*, 1991, p. 174)
Mana, becomings and passive vitalism

‘What if, Jung asks, what if the archaic point-of-view is right? In that case, surely the primitive theory of mana — mana being a term for a supernatural force that emanates from certain magic individuals, a quasi-divine, primal, vital forceforce— which maintains that ‘there exists a universally distributed power that objectively produces extraordinary effects’ (such as sorcerers, witches, werewolves, and the like); that ‘everything that exists, acts, or it is not real’ that something only is by means of its energy; and that Being is a force-field, deserves to be taken seriously (which is not the same as taking it literally)? […]

In this thought-experiment, Jung wonders whether the object may actually be said to constitute the subject; that is, whether ‘the psychic function — the soul, or the spirit, or the unconscious — originates in me’ or whether ‘the psyche is, in the early stages of the formation of consciousness, actually outside us in the form of intentionalities and arbitrary powers, and gradually grows into us in the course of psychic development’ (para. 140). In the end, Jung concludes that such a view, according to which ‘souls’ are not split-off parts of the personality, but rather that personality itself emerges from the coming-together and embodiment of these ‘souls’, such that over the historical course of human development they become embodied (literally: incarnated) in the individual, until they constitute ‘the world [. . .] that we now call psyche’ (para. 140), may well be paradoxical, but is nevertheless ‘not entirely inconceivable’ (para. 141).

(Bishop, 2008, pp. 509-510).
When in the course of our own development we feel ourselves achieving a unified personality out of a multitude of contradictory tendencies, we experience something like a complex growing-together of the psyche. Since the human body is built up by heredity out of a multitude of Mendelian units, it does not seem altogether out of the question that the human psyche is similarly put together. (Jung, “Archaic Main,” 1931, para. 141)
“Becomings,” generally written in the agrammatical plural, are the multiplicity of experiential states in which lines are blurred between human consciousness and animal awareness, between biopsychic life and the nature of matter itself. (Ramey, 2010, p. 10)

You become animal only molecularly. You do not become a barking dog, but by barking, if it is done with enough feeling, with enough necessity and composition, you emit a molecular dog. Man does not become wolf, or vampire, as if he changed molar species; the vampire and werewolf are becomings of man, in other words, proximities between molecules in composition, relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness between emitted particles. (Deleuze and Guttari, *ATP*, 2004, p. 303)

Becoming can and should be qualified as becoming-animal even in the absence of a term that would be the animal become. The becoming animal of the human being is real, even if the animal the human being becomes is not; and the becoming-other of the animal is real, even if that something other the animal becomes is not. This is the point to clarify: that a becoming lacks a subject distinct from itself; but also that it has no term, since its term in turn exists only as taken up in another becoming of which it is the subject, and which coexists, forms a block, with the first. This is the principle according to which there is a reality specific to becoming (the Bergsonian idea of a coexistence of very different durations,” superior to “ours,” all of them in communication). (ibid., 263)
From ‘active’ to ‘passive’ vitalism (or active and passive holism)

• Jacob von Uexküll (1864-1944)

J. Von Uexküll founded the Institute of Umwelt Research at Hamburg University in 1926. His approach to the ‘invisible worlds’ of both animals and humans was inspired by Kant, seeking to explore in novel ways the ‘phenomenal world’ of the animal (its ‘self-world’), while ‘nature’ itself is invoked as the great noumenon which lies eternally beyond the reach of knowledge’ (Uexküll 1992, p. 390).

Jacob von Uexküll is known for having introduced a new school in theoretical biology: ethology.
Involution, alliance, transversal contra filiation (via the example of the werewolf and vampire from *ATP*)

...sorcerers know that werewolves are bands, and vampires too, and that bands transform themselves into one another. But what exactly does that mean, the animal as band or pack? [...] How can we conceive of a peopling, a propagation, a becoming that is without filiation or hereditary production? A multiplicity without the unity of an ancestor? [...] Unnatural participations or nuptials are the true Nature spanning the kingdoms of nature. Propagation by epidemic, by contagion, has nothing to do with filiation by heredity, even if the two themes intermingle and require each other. The vampire does not filiate, it infects. The difference is that contagion, epidemic, involves terms that are entirely heterogeneous: for example, a human being, an animal, and a bacterium, a virus, a molecule, a microorganism [...] These combinations are neither genetic nor structural; they are interkingoms, unnatural participations. (pp. 266-267)
Heidegger (1929-30 Lectures, Freiburg University): “two decisive steps”

1. The holistic character of the organism – Driesch
2. The integration of the animal within its environment – Uexküll

Heidegger credits Uexküll with providing a second essential step in biology: “his insight into the relational structure between the animal and its environment”. Uexküll’s contribution lies in that he thematises the relational structure as inherently necessary to understanding both the organism and environment.

‘As was the case with Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, Uexküll’s thought plays an important role in the articulation of Deleuze’s own ontological vision’ (Buchanan, 2008, p. 154)
Uexküll, Spinoza, affects and Deleuze

‘You will define and animal, or a human being, not by its form, its organs, and its functions, and not as a subject either; you will define it by the affects of which it is capable. Affective capacity, with a maximum threshold and a minimum threshold, is a constant notion in Spinoza’

(Deleuze, “Spinoza and Us” (1978), in Spinoza: Practical Philosophy, p. 124)
‘In short, if we are Spinozists we will not define a thing by its form, nor by its organs and functions, not as a substance or a subject. Borrowing terms from the Middle Ages, or from geography, we will define it by *longitude or latitude*. A body can be anything; it can be an animal, a body of sounds, a mind, or an idea; it can be a linguistic corpus, a social body, a collectivity.’

Life has always seemed to me like a plant that lives on its rhizome. Its true life is invisible, hidden in the rhizome. The part that appears above ground lasts only a single summer. Then it withers away – an ephemeral apparition. When we think of the unending growth and decay of life and civilizations, we cannot escape the impression of absolute nullity. Yet I have never lost a sense of something that lives and endures underneath the eternal flux. What we see is the blossom, which passes. The rhizome remains.

(Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, 1961, p. 4)