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The Philosophy of Gilbert Simondon. Main Assumptions, Notions and Ideas

In recent years the philosophy of Gilbert Simondon has come to the attention of a wider public. Some readers not previously acquainted with his work may be positively surprised to find that they are already familiar with his theories, notions or ideas, having read the works written by another famous philosopher, Gilles Deleuze. Deleuze was a representative of French postmodernist philosophy, his works entering the mainstream in the nineties. In retrospect, it may indeed seem that Simondon's theory was destined to be realized in the form of practical exercises, such as those presented in the work by Deleuze titled *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (2014). This is so, because Deleuze's main assumptions are closely bound up with the work by Simondon, and in his philosophical work *Difference and Repetition* (2010) Deleuze took over the ideas by Simondon and transformed them into categories, which brought them popularity. David Scott in *Gilbert Simondon's Psychic and Collective Individuation. A Critical Introduction and Guide* to Simondon writes that Gilles Deleuze is unquestionably

... most responsible for bringing Simondon's work to the public, even in France. Therefore, it is not merely coincidental that in nearly all of Deleuze's published works — from *Difference and Repetition* to *Logic of Sense* to *A Thousand Plateaus* and *What is Philosophy?* — Simondon theses or concepts can be implicitly detected or explicitly identified. (Scott 2014: 14)

Thus, there is no need to deny that Gilles Deleuze extensively made use of theoretical tools worked out by Simondon. The original orientation of the works by Simondon was, however, technical and its basic notions and ideas, like transduction, de-phasing, information were technical in character. Such notions as metastability were taken from thermodynamics. His doctoral

thesis concerned processes of information and individuation (*L'individuation à la lumière des notions de forme et d'information* [2013]), and was later published in two books: *L'individu et sa genèse physico-biologique* ([1964] 1995) and *L'individuation psychique et collective* (1989). Another important work was also *Du mode d'existence des objets techniques* ([1958] 2001), which was published in English as *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects* and translated by Cecile Malaspina and John Rogove (2017). It is the only complete work by Simondon translated into English language. Nevertheless, a number of inquiring authors (Muriel Combes, Simon Mills, David Scott, Pascal Chabot, Anne Sauvagnargues) have considerably contributed to the broader reception of Simondonian works by detailed elaboration of his main assumptions and analysis of his notions.

The first work by Simondon and his complementary doctoral thesis was devoted to the analysis of technology and technical objects. However, this later gave rise to many adaptations of his theory in different branches of the humanities and sciences on technology. One such adaptation was Deleuze's theory of ontology or immanent ethics. Deleuze introduced Simondonian concepts into contemporary philosophy, developing them and revealing their philosophical consequences. One of these ideas that entered the field of philosophy through the work of Deleuze and was later transferred to the still developing field of research called new materialism was the idea described by Michał Herer (2006) in his book *Gilles Deleuze. Struktury — Maszyny — Kreacje*. Herer demonstrates the particular treatment of objects-substances and their relations in the area of ontology. Deleuze's aim was to make a surprising transfer from the substantial to relational dimension of ontological phenomena, resulting in a change in attitude concerning the process of being and becoming, which was exactly what Simondon's research objective was. As a result of this changed point of view, philosophy can no longer treat being as a kind of substance, and the mode of creation by means of form and matter, known among Greek classics as hylemorphism, must also be changed. Herer strongly emphasizes the importance of treating relation as the primary building block of being, rather than obscuring it as only the servant connection between previously formed and stabilized object-substances. This is one of the most convincing elements introduced into philosophy since the linguistic turn.

What appears in the writings by Simondon is the whole idea of relation as the basis for ontological processes of creation, rather than its playing a subsidiary role to substance. This combination of being and becoming as a replacement for the substantiality of being appears to be a turning point in thinking, initiating the problematic of individuation, which entered philosophy primarily as a reflection on the genesis of the individuum. This

genesis no longer has a hylemorphic origin: for Simondon “the individual is not a substance, but the result of a process of individuation” (Chabot 2003: 73). This is the point where Simondon, even if chronologically prior to Deleuze, goes one step further than the author of *Difference and Repetition*, finding solutions to problems that, in the writings by Deleuze, are presented and problematized. Once more, it seems as if we need the author of *The Logic of Sense* (2011) to indicate the importance of the problematic of individuation, which did not receive due attention earlier. However, to understand individuation as it is presented by Simondon, we have to start with an explanation of more basic processes that take part in its construction. Thus, Simondon

... will replace “notions of substance, form, and matter”, which are inadequate for thinking the operation whereby being comes to be individuated, “with more fundamental notions of primary information, internal resonance, potential energy, and orders of magnitude”. (Simondon 1995: 30, Simondon 2005: 32, cited in: Combes 2013: 5)

These processes, together with others like: transduction, metastability or the transindividual will be described in the following part of the work. In describing these processes Simondon adds an important lesson about the ontology of being, because he is

... more interested in ... the transformative process that in nominal identities. His is a philosophy of genesis. In each order of reality, he challenges notions of identity and substance. He presents a “doctrine” based on the idea: the individual is not a substance, but a result of a process of individuation. (Chabot 2003: 73)

In this way the notion of individuation is introduced as the basic ontogenetical process that takes part in the construction not only of the physical individuum, but also the psychic and collective.

Individuation as such is currently still a new notion and defining it is still in progress. However, even now, when it has not yet received a clear explanation, there are theories that seem to confirm that it may constitute the answer to problems that have been diagnosed as part of the capitalist economy and its accompanying troubles. It even seems as if individuation was invented to solve problems of which we are not yet distinctly conscious. So, the term is not a new one for writers and researchers dealing with the problematic of the poor conditions of the individual in contemporary society. One of these writers is Bernard Stiegler (2009), who has drawn readers’ attention to the possibility that individuation, as a self-creating process, will no longer be possible, which would lead humans to being deprived of the most humane of human values and generally to their inability to feel,

perceive and experience; Stiegler calls this situation affective and symbolic misery. By exposing the negative consequences of the inability to create one's own being in the process of individuation, Stiegler indicates how important individuation is, and has stressed the necessity of including it as one of the most urgent areas of research to be undertaken today. That is why I would like to present the main assumptions of Simondon's philosophy to ensure that there is no excuse for excluding the problem of individuation from the field of problematization. It is also important to remember that there would be no Deleuzian inventions and no idea of the production of new modes of living without the philosophy by Simondon. Once more, it appears that Simondon's novel ideas can be treated as answers to problems that have not yet been formulated or are still in the course of formulation. To be able to understand the value of his philosophy, we must first focus our attention on certain terms of physical and technological origin that are used in his work to introduce the main assumptions of the process of individuation.

The most important notions that are used to explain the working of individuation are: transduction, metastability and the transindividual. To start with, we can observe together with Muriel Combes that: "in Simondon's thought, being as being is not one, because it precedes any individual. This is why he calls it preindividual" (Combes 2013: 2). This "preindividual" is exactly where the Deleuzian ideas about favoring relations to substances intersect with what Herer says about it in his book on Deleuze. According to Combes the passage from preindividual being to individual is of vital importance and to understand it

... we must not embark on a search for a principle of individuation. This is where traditional ontology has gone astray: in privileging the constituted term, it has ignored the operation constituting the individual, that is, individuation as a process. To understand individuation, we must turn to the process wherein a principle is not only put to work but also constituted. (Combes 2013: 2)

Thus, we cannot use principle as an instruction on how to shape the individual. The point is that we must first create this principle, and, in fact, there is no "we" in this constitution. The problem is thus that the human individual must be the principle of individuation and individuation at the same time, that is why David Scott calls this "the living problem of individuation" (Scott 2014: 33). This means that

... for the living being, on the other hand, "individuation is not produced by one sole operation, limited in time; the living being is itself partially its own principle of individuation". (Scott 2014: 33)

Simondon talks about a certain preindividual system, a certain milieu that must be changed together with the “germ” or “seed” of change introduced into the system. This “seed” will initiate the structuring of this system. Simondon writes:

Before all individuation, being can be understood as a system containing potential energy. Although this energy becomes active within the system, it is called potential, because it requires a transformation of the system in order to be structured, that is, to be actualized in accordance with structures . . . The emergence of an individual within preindividual being should be conceived in terms of the resolution of a tension between potentials belonging to previously separated orders of magnitude. (Combes 2013: 4)

This resolution of a tension between potentials takes place in the case of the development of a crystal, which constitutes the primary example chosen by Simondon to visualize how the process of individuation proceeds and how the individual appears. It starts with the assumption about a certain potency and tension within a milieu and then follows the situation when “a germ”, “a seed” is thrown into this milieu. This “germ” destroys the metastable equilibrium that previously characterized this milieu and in this way it inaugurates the processes of change and adaptation. The notion of metastable equilibrium indicates that before the working of the process of individuation, so before the processes of subject creation, the system responsible for this creation stayed in a certain balance, where balance means that nothing disturbed its functioning. This was called the pre-individual system. However, what interests us here is how the individuum is created, and it is when this introductory equilibrium is destroyed that this occurs. What we have here is a state

. . . when the least modification of system parameters (pressure, temperature, etc.) suffices to break its equilibrium ... The least impurity with a structure isomorphic to that of ice plays the role of a seed for crystallization and suffices to turn the water to ice. (Combes 2013: 3)

Simondon uses here the example of the emergence of a crystal, which is a particularly apt example in this case. He writes:

The germ is a foreign body or a shock to the system. It is a piece of information — that is an element (or an event) that is singular and new. The germ introduces an asymmetry into the amorphous substance. . . . It is the first layer of the crystal. Its structure polarizes the material around it, triggering a corresponding change in structure. (Chabot 2003: 83-84)

According to this the newly structured layer of the crystal becomes the matrix and principle for the individuation of the next layer and so on. In this

way the crystal and its principle are individuated at the same time and in the same process, becoming matrices for the further layers of crystal.

Simondon extensively uses terms from physics, for example thermodynamics, or from informatics to describe the processes or ideas of individuation. The idea that governs the explanation of the emergence of a crystal is described with the use of terms from thermodynamics. Simondon also explains the working of transduction and information. Transduction is connected with metastable equilibrium and the preindividual. It means

... an operation — physical, biological, mental, social — by which an activity propagates step-by-step within a given domain, and founds this propagation on a structuration of the domain that is realized from place to place: each area of the constituted structure serves as the principle and the model for the next area, as a primer for its constitution, to the extent that the modification expands progressively at the same time as the structuring operation. (Simondon 1964: 18 cited in: Mills 2016: 38)

So, the whole idea of transduction amounts to constitute tension of potential energies, making this the very basis and principle for further phases of production, just as in the case of the creation of the crystal, as well as others individua. The following layers of the organization appear out of the tension at the metastable phase: the “germ”, the “seed” destroys this equilibrium and inaugurates the working of the hidden potential.

Another element of Simondon’s philosophy that is indispensable for the explanation of the working of the processes of becoming is affection and affectivity. David Scott eloquently and convincingly presents this connection between individuation and emotion-emotivity or affection-affectivity and their basic relation to the most humane of human qualities that manifests itself in situations of creation, becoming, or death. Scott emphasizes not so much the physical origin and physical background of Simondon’s theory, but focuses on the infinity and eternity that are reflected and contained in each time event or structure of development in the ongoing process of individuation. This emphasis on what is most humane in the human, this line of flight in being — as Deleuze would say — a flight toward the unconditioned is, according to Scott, what defines the processes of becoming individual in the strongest way. Scott writes: “To be eternal is to be operationally ‘a being-related’ through the structuring operation of individuation” (Scott 2014: 78); in another fragment he states that “eternity designates the transductive temporality fostered by the recurrent process of providing its own permanent condition” (Scott 2014: 78). In this fragment we can see that “being-related” is part not only of the physical construction of the body, but also its psychological dimension. Constant striving toward what transcends the subject becomes the basic relation out of which the psyche of the subject

is produced. This relation joins the individual with the transindividual, *i.e.*, that which transpires the limits of the individual.

The process of individuation for Scott is the matrix for the “eternal”, or, to put it differently, it is the “eternal” included within the stages of individuation, drawing individuation still further in the direction of the limit or transgression, which “provides the individuated being with the impetus for its coming into existence” (Scott 2014: 77). Emotion and affectivity are bearers of this impetus, are the finite realization of this intended eternity and the elements of the process of individuation which “incessantly and persistently creates being as it advances, maintaining in each created or individuated scope of being, *hic et nunc*, an operation of individuation” (Scott 2014: 77). So, we can conclude that the words and notions of physical origin in the book by Scott work in favor of a more complicated and general view or the idea of the human being as something that results from the ongoing passage between the subject and its milieu. A subject is taken here not as a substance, but as a place of intertwining relations, here “everything interacts with everything else. This point of departure ... [is] ‘a flowing-matter in which no point of anchorage nor center of reference would be assignable’” (Deleuze 1991: 57, cited in: Sauvagnargues 2016: 101); however, it ontologically perseveres because it assumes a kind of “metastability that grows itself (*se grossit*), enriches itself, creates itself indefinitely, that maintains within the living the potentiality for becoming” (Scott 2014: 78). The being-related, the being-becoming, the being as a process are terms that best express what Simondon wanted to express when talking about affectivity and emotions. Individuation is treated here as their constant and intensive evolution.

However, we cannot say that individuation is a purely internal phenomenon. It is not a linear narration that expresses some kind of stream of consciousness. It is rather the place of influences coming from the outside. It is also the self-perpetuating mechanism that creates rules for its own further production. It is a process, an operation, an invention, an experiment. The emergence of crystal that reflects this procedure of becoming that stays in connection with infinity is the best example chosen by Simondon to explain it. Layers of individuum provided in the forms of experiences of time and meaning constitute the objective individuated realizations of individuation. However, individuation is not only about of what is substantial and objectively given. The relations that create the moving, acting part of this process are equally important, because to be individuated is not so much to be a subject, but more concerned with the tension treated as a certain line of flight, thanks to which the individuum is always already something that escapes its own objectivity, something that is created in the strive to transcend its constituted layers toward the way outside it — and it is this

that perpetuates it. The direction towards which it aspires is more crucial and representative here than what it already “is”, because it “is” more that which it has not yet become. In the transindividual a place, a relation, an emotion that are about to be realized mean more than their actual realization and final effect, something that has yet to become provides the way along which the becoming may happen. The constituted objected layers are less important, only being valid to the extent that they constitute the formulated invitation to checking what awaits at the end of their launching powers. This mechanism then is not only the rolling stone of fate or fortune, but the impetus with which the individual known primarily as emotion may realize its interests. Different phases, changes and stabilities intertwine then in a form of propagation that leads to the resolution of the full potential, which is partially accelerated by death, yet without death, the eternity of becoming might have never been inaugurated or expressed.

Affectivity in Simondon’s theory plays the role of the enlargement of the area of interest beyond the main area of technical objects and technology. This is what makes this theory unique and resourceful for the further opening into spheres that were to be made practical in the works by Deleuze. Simondon’s affectivity provides structures that may be used for the organization or introduction of new experiences into the overall sensibility system of human experience. Thus, it is not just something additional that lays a rich interpretation over the crude facts, but rather something that is responsible for our insights within the realm of individual knowledge, for primary projections of the “Self’s” understanding, which later lead and direct all further epistemological decisions with regard to the basic preconceptions about the Self. All convictions or presumptions which are built as the extension of a subject’s individual horizon are oriented according to this initial state of affection, so it governs all our further knowledge and “the subject is defined [here] by this double expressiveness: of structure and of operation” — as Scott observes (Scott 2014: 67), “affectivity adds still another dimension: ‘the affective state polarizes the living’” (Scott 2014: 67) — these are the words of Simondon. We can accept them as introducing a completely new significance for emotions as such, for it is in the area usually called the “emotional sphere” of the subject that individuation takes place, and it is here that emotions produce the effect of “polarization” which is the mechanism responsible for individuation. Individuation thus is the rearrangement of new layers of meaning around a certain “seed” of disturbance, which is explained on the example of the emergence of the crystal. This new, alien “seed” inaugurates an adjustment in the old horizons of subjective meaning, but above all, as something alien to inner life, it must be enclosed in new emotional habits producing new emotional tensions, in the

process of constructing the psyche; it must be able to assume new conditions of affectivity against which it had been initially posed. Individuation is based on this tension which arises whenever a certain ambiguity appears: if we are not sure of what we are experiencing, if something new happens in our innermost life, we live through a kind of “indefiniteness” or “vagueness”. The process of individuation is inaugurated at this point and is realized as certain problematization, a certain positioning in the face of established objects, meanings, psychological events or traces. Then, this tension is relieved in the form of the exteriorization of two binary poles in the process of polarization. Polarization is responsible for excavation of these binary poles, fossilizing them in the form of certain “beings”. The constant movement of polarization produces diversified objects or objectivities of values, and it is affectivity that is the source of this movement, because it is impossible not to feel, not to mentally react, even in the case of the absence of external influences: it is enough for an emotion to be provoked from inside. The subject’s inner life is full of such provocations. Affectivity, thus, is a constant flow and a constant production of new stimuli, which become imperatives that must be addressed, or a stand that must be taken. Every new concept then needs new response, and this response requires the reorientation of all preindividual territories and all subsequent individual convictions.

Polarization is thus the origin of this situatedness, of this relativity closing some of these resulting directions. And, yet, it is not a question of taking on certain qualities of becoming a definite object for retrospection, but, on the contrary, it is that these binary objects at both ends of the emotional tension are only the results of this tension, tension which is, according to Simondon, our main goal in this world. Following this way of thinking, we are left with an emotion that terminates in its two poles: positive and negative, strong and weak, light and dark, hot or cold. It is this polarization that helps to bring to the surface of the discourse spheres of existence that may prove to be a completely new experience in the life of the subject, and, as such, they may take into consideration completely new areas of sensibility or becoming. This polarization, drawing within itself two dimensional matrices which constitute some of the main mechanisms of individuation, results in the creation of new emotions, new affects, or simply in the provision of names for that which has not yet been named: it would be too difficult to recognize them in the form not strengthened to the extent of certain extreme poles, based on pattern “positive — negative”. Polarization helps us to name these affects because it situates them in a greater or lesser distance from the extremes. There must be certain field within which unnamed affections are played out. Such fields belong to what Simondon called the topography of emotions. This topography helps to orient the attitude of a subject along

a certain line based on strong or weak tension. In this way a new emotion may be included into the repertoire of emotions in order to be further classified on different topological scales.

Polarization helps to extract what was previously disguised as different undetermined powers in the chaotic mass of experiences. It has at its disposal Derridian (1997) *differance* proliferating, multiplying or disseminating (Derrida 2010) that which was originally believed to be the only One. Individuation and affectivity add a new element here: what has been proliferated may also be individuated and brought to the surface of experience. It may indicate new directions for thought, enriching not only vocabulary, but also ontology and the ways we exist. Affectivity is the guide to a subject's map of reading, thanks to which a subject can orient her knowledge about the world and herself, because affects are what we are, we feel through them, we perceive through them, and we think through them, so whether we like it or not, they constitute the very construction we call the subject.

Trivial as it may seem, affection influences not only our perception and feelings, but also thoughts. However, thinking takes on the function of directing the inner life toward certain realms of meaning, "it orients itself on the basis of a series of emerging affective differences, intensive and qualitative" (Scott 2014: 68-69). Within the realm of affection we experience

... a series of sensible gradients, intensities, rather than ... objects: "movements, of which we are hardly cognizant, slip through us on the frontiers of consciousness in the form of indefinable, extremely rapid sensations". (Sarraute 1963 cited in: Scott 2014: 69)

This affection is also responsible for the appearance of a certain state of mind, a state of individuation, when we start to feel something that lies or happens outside ourselves, we can orient toward it and try to feel it or perceive it in a form that is attained by this outside living-being, thus, we can abandon the position of our ego, our "I", and rather experience in a form imposed from this outside, as it is There. This kind of experience is what Deleuze called "becoming an animal, a flower, a stone", the experience in which we leave what fossilizes in the form of the sedimented "I" or "Self", and we live here only through emotions that are felt as taken from out-there, that are in the possession of another being: to be able to abandon one's own point of view, the position of our eye, in order to become someone else's eye, to make another being the source of your emotion, to become what someone else becomes — this is the position Deleuze tries to propose for us in his practical exercises in the form of different plateaus. This is also the attitude Simondon tries to assume when theoretically analyzing becoming what one is not, becoming according to the lines of experiencing indicated by another

being. This directing toward something that exceeds our known experience is called in Simondonian theory the transindividual.

Transindividual indicates the experiencing of the other in its otherness, difference in its difference, without trying to reduce it or to bring it to the common ground, to relieve its tension. In this experience it is exactly this otherness of being and becoming that becomes our own: we become this animal outside there, this stone, this pattern, this sound — these experiences enter the realm of our own, but as different. This is the only true way of understanding the Gadamerian (2006) idea of the fusion of horizons, where we do not try to reduce what is strange into our own realm of experiences, the only true way of getting knowledge is to introduce what is alien into the very interiority of our minds, to make it part of us, not by reduction but by enlargement, not to understand what is alien, but try to be this alien, to think his thoughts, to feel the way she feels, to perceive what she is able to perceive. Only this way of understanding is true understanding; other ways are reductionist compassion, but putting oneself into the other's position may give us the experience of his own worlds of understanding. It is in this connection, when new affections, new sensibilities arise, on the frontiers of these encounters that new experiences create what we later call an "I". The subject's ways of feeling are transformed and a new direction of individuation is assumed. We become on the very limit with what is newly experienced. The point is to be able to abandon one's Self and be, for a moment, transferred into another direction, by the experience of what is There. It is only when this own Self is not taken into consideration that the subject can truly experience what is not its own. These states of being completely lost in somewhere, in something, in Otherness, are described in Simondon as a powerful experience of transformation and Beauty. In Deleuzian plateaus we are provided with practical exercises in which we can train ourselves in this ability to be lost, to be abandoned for a moment of pure Otherness, pure Difference. Paradoxically, this moment of forgetting about one's own ego or Self, may prove to be the best formation experience ever analyzed. Simondon provides us with the theory to help us understand, while Deleuze presents practical exercises to help us master the skill of forgetting about one's own rights. What is also worth mentioning is that these two examples of thinking and acting may appear to be the best solution for Bernard Stiegler's diagnosis about the growing symbolic and affective misery of human minds that are constantly exposed to the destructive conventions of capitalism. Other writers have also referred to this unique experience of something completely different without ever reducing it to one's own patterns of behavior, thus legitimizing Simondon's theory. Jean-Paul Sartre, for example, in his essay "The Transcendence of the Ego" writes about "impersonal consciousness":

This absolute consciousness, when it is purified of the “I”, is no longer in any way a subject, nor is it a collection of representations; it is quite simply a precondition and an absolute source of existence. (Sartre 2004: 51 cited in: Scott 2014: 70)

According to Sartre we, as subjects, are immersed in the “inter-psychical relations of men in society” (Sartre: 1948: 83 cited in: Scott 2014: 70) that create the milieu in which we are submerged. Abandoning the position of the embracing ego, we may undergo a complete change of perspective. Simondon writes:

An action carried out by the subject expresses spirituality through its establishing an “objective eternity”, creating, if you will, “a monument more durable than bronze in language, institution, art, oeuvre” ... An emotion expresses spirituality to the extent that it permits this union with action to penetrate the subject, “flowing back into it and filling the subject up, rendering the subject symbolic in relation to itself, reciprocal in relation to itself, comprehending itself via reference to what it encroaches upon”. (Scott 2014: 79)

This spirituality is what arises in confrontation with the exercises provided by Deleuze, which were designed on the basis of Simondon’s theory. The reaction to such exercises is symbolic and it gains the form via this reference, changing under the influence of what it encounters.

Summarizing, we can repeat after Simon Mills, who indicates that transduction in Simondon’s writings may “be understood ontologically as an operation of ground creation” (Mills 2016: 38), which does not prioritize substantive effects, but the process itself. The best example of the transductive process is the creation of the crystal in metastable liquid. The exterior element that initiates this process of transduction may also be called information, which causes a certain crisis in a metastable milieu and this crisis tends to be resolved by acquiring a new equilibrium, so also a new metastability. “The physical individual — indicates Simondon — must be thought of as a chrono-topological ensemble whose complex becoming is made from successive crises of individuation” (Simondon 2013: 149, cited in: Mills 2016: 45); these crises result from the introduction of new information, which changes the phases of the individuation, each crisis being something unmatched that must be adapted to the surroundings: this is the way information transmits its values in a newly created milieu. Pascal Chabot calls this state of the introduction of information the combination of being and becoming, (see: Chabot 2003: 85), because

... between the already formed crystal and the structurable milieu exists the limit of the crystalline individual. The limit is never completely one or

another [being or becoming]. It is the here-and-now of individuation, the point where that which is and that which is becoming interact. (Chabot 2003: 85)

This here-and-now is called transduction, and this is “the propagation of information in an amorphous milieu” (Chabot 2003: 85). A similar situation with overcoming what is foreign to achieve a certain metastable milieu occurs when an individuum encounters something that transcends frontiers of its usual absorption, this is “the disparity it finds between itself and what exceeds it” (Mills 2016: 84). This is the disparity between that which is known and that which is new in experience. In this situation a certain tension arises, as in the case of the physical individuation of the crystal, but in this case the tension is called anxiety and accompanies reflexive questioning that is experienced by the individuum. This questioning has the purpose of introducing a new equilibrium into the area of disparity and, together with the state of anxiety and tension, is directed toward the accomplishment of transindividual relations which go beyond what is only inter-individual. The transindividual takes the position of direct connection with what exceeds the subject. In this way individuation creates the psychic qualities that strive toward what it is not yet in its becoming. So, we can observe here the direct connection of the subject with what is beyond it, and this transcending indicates what is most contemporary and promising in Simondon’s theory. The creative power present here comes from what is not subjective, from this relation of directing toward the outside of the system. This directing is what from the ancient times was called desire, and this suggests new area of research that would require a separate analysis. The subjects of metastable equilibrium, transindividual, affectivity, transduction and information that have been described in this paper must suffice for this introductory presentation of this relatively new figure in the currently expanding area of philosophy dealing with individuation. Let us also call this analysis transindividual in character on account of its becoming out of that towards which it is directed, and this direction is definitely indicated by works that already have their place in philosophy; the works of Deleuze, Stiegler and new materialism have delineated an area of interests that will, without doubt, continue to be investigated in the future, because the problems are already here, as well as an outline of the answers provided by Gilbert Simondon.

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The Philosophy of Gilbert Simondon. Main Assumptions, Notions and Ideas

Abstract

The objective of the article is to present main assumptions, notions and ideas that stand behind or support thinking as it is proposed in the philosophy of Gilbert Simondon. In understanding of these concepts very helpful appears to be their elaboration in the works of Gilles Deleuze, whose ideas are much better known for Polish reader. However, Deleuzian concepts serve sometimes as the very good explanation of Simondonian philosophy not only because of their better accessibility. The reason for this situation is that they constitute very apt problematization and practical use of these concepts. That is why it is not a mistake to try to reveal Simondonian philosophy with the help of this perspective. The article aims at this kind of presentation using also the inquiry by Muriel Combes, Simon Mills, David Scott, Pascal Chabot, Michał Herer and Anne Sauvagnargues. The suggested analysis tries to substitute the thinking about subject and subjectivity as the main notions describing the Self with the thinking in terms of individuation as the most fundamental process regarding the powers of becoming. Notions taken from philosophy by Simondon seem to be very successful in revealing this difference in thinking.

Keywords: transduction, individuation, subjectivity, Simondon, Deleuze.

