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# Introduction: From the Intelligible to the Genetic

## The ontology of anomalous individuation

The starting point of this investigation into the contemporary stakes of a philosophy of individuation could be expressed in the seemingly banal, even innocuous, question that Heidegger regarded as the refrain of 'Western' metaphysics: 'What are beings?' For those not prone to the pious wonder (or simulation thereof) that has adorned the return of ontology to the forefront of philosophical interrogation, such a question, when not answered in a Quinean spirit with a hearty and democratic 'Everything', seems to announce nothing less than the paralysis of thought, faced with a speculative demand as crushingly vague as it is all-encompassing. Invoking the sanctity of tradition or the responsibilities of thought in the face of an inscrutable donation, a gift of being, bodes no better. And yet, behind what initially appears as a woefully underdetermined question, lies the vital matter of philosophical confrontations, of shifts and redefinitions whose intensity and impurity bear witness to the polemical character, at once contingent *and* determinate, of philosophical practice. It is with one such polemical shift that this book is concerned.

In terms that admittedly are yet insufficient to capture the specificity of our theme, this shift is that between an ontology of *individuality* and an ontology of *individuation*. The guiding traits of this shift, together with its consequences for what we may understand by the term 'ontology', will only acquire their definite physiognomy as we advance in our investigation. At this juncture, it is nevertheless necessary to sketch briefly the twofold approach that this inquiry will take towards its primary object: the problem of individuation, its transformations and contemporary import. The first part of this book will involve a textual and historical, or archaeological, inquiry into the modern emergence of what we will hazard to call the *genetic modality of individuation*. The key locus of this emergence will be identified as Kant's encounter with the problem of the organic, as it is formulated and transformed between the *Critique of Judgment* and the writings collected as the *Opus Postumum* (Chapters 1 and 2). The term 'problem' should be understood here, and

throughout, in two senses: firstly, in the vulgar connotation of a difficulty or even a threat, encroaching upon the coherence of a given philosophical orientation, and secondly, in the positive or constitutive sense given to the notion of 'problem' by Deleuze; that is, as the impersonal field of singularities out of which thought draws its localized solutions, the latent structure that elicits the dynamisms of conceptualization.<sup>1</sup> As I shall demonstrate with regard to Kant, it is with the irruption of the problem of the organic (as a problem in the first sense) that Kant's thought experiences (or perhaps we should say 'suffers') the constitution of a new problem in this second sense: the problem of individuation qua (self-)organization. The inability truly to incorporate the problem of the organic either within the Critical system itself or as a component in a new problematic – attested to by Kant's struggles in the *Opus Postumum* (Chapter 2), as well as by Nietzsche's destructive critique in his early notebooks on *The Concept of the Organic since Kant* (Chapter 3) – will be exhibited as the negative site of a new philosophical intervention. This intervention, prefigured in various strands of post-Kantian philosophy, from Schelling to Peirce, but only truly carried out in the works of Gilbert Simondon and Gilles Deleuze, will radically transfigure the presuppositions and results of critique and of its concept of the transcendental, by conferring full rights upon that genetic modality of individuation which is only problematically inscribed in Kant's own writings.

Having dealt with the circumstances and consequences of the irruption of individuation as genesis within Kant's critique – specifically, with the formulation of a distinction between autonomy and heteronomy as Kant's provisional and problematic response to this question, as well as with the transformation or collapse of this response in his own 'post-critical' writings and in those of Whitehead and Nietzsche – I aim to inquire into how an alternative ontological stance and epistemic configuration can incorporate the problem of the organic, the problem of a *genetic modality of individuation*, in a manner transversal to the distinction between autonomous (self-organizing) and heteronomous (mechanistic) modalities of individuation. This post-Kantian, and to a great extent anti-Kantian, stance will be surveyed under the heading of an *ontology of anomalous individuation*, and will be elucidated with specific reference to a conceptual thread running through the work of Deleuze, but complemented and enriched by insights gleaned from the writings of Peirce and Simondon. As Part II of the book will endeavour to clarify, whilst the encounter with the problem of the organic elicits the specific form of Kant's distinction between autonomy and heteronomy,

the dissolution of this distinction within the ontology of anomalous individuation entails the jettisoning of the organic as an instance of *autonomous* individuation, whilst also calling for a thoroughgoing reconsideration of the ontology of organization in general. Chapters 4 and 5 will consider models of individuation that positively evade the distinction between autonomous and heteronomous individuation in Kant, models that we will refer to as *anomalous* insofar as, with varying degrees of radicality and conceptual consistency, they seek to map the material and cognitive operations that lead to the constitution of individuals without having recourse to *principles of individuation* (immaterial laws, eminent entities or separate aspects of being); such principles would both account for the real consistency, and precondition the epistemic seizure, of individuals *as* individuals. The two principal models we will consider, Peircean *habit* and Simondonian *transduction*, eschew the distinction between autonomous and heteronomous individuation by suspending the presupposition, at once ontological and epistemic, of constituted terms determining the being of individuals; instead, they aim to account, amongst other things, for the very emergence of the difference between autonomy and heteronomy. However, it is only with a critical investigation of the reconfigured role of individuation as genesis, within the ontological problematic of Deleuze, that our philosophical archaeology of the genetic modality of individuation will receive its proper complement. The ‘crisis of critique’ exposed in Chapter 3 will be relayed by the constitution of another problematic of individuation, in the guise of a new metaphysics whose co-ordinates may be found in the concepts of difference, intensity and virtuality, and whose methodological aspect takes the name of constructivism. Not only will this part serve as a complement to the archaeological inquiry undertaken in Chapters 1, 2 and 3, but, in line with a certain relativity (though by no means relativism) of problems, it will become evident how our understanding of the crisis of Kantian critique, as a crisis borne by the problem of genesis and not by the problem of organic totality, is one that can only take place from the ontological standpoint of anomalous individuation. ‘Anomaly’ here designates the *unequal* or differential ground of production that lies beneath the actual, constituted, individuals which provide the objects of the philosophies of representation.

So much for the shape and sequence of our investigation. In the remainder of this introduction we shall be concerned with laying down some of the historical and terminological foundations necessary for the comprehension of what is meant here by the philosophy or ontology of individuation. In this respect, and unlike the rest of the book, what

follows will be concerned with doctrinal history, with questions such as: What is 'traditionally' meant by the problem of individuation? or: What are the principal transformations undergone by the concept of individuation prior to the Kantian formulation of the organic? The general rubric of the following remarks, to borrow once again from Heidegger, could thus be designated as 'Being and Thought'. Hopefully, the characterization of the way in which the problem of individuation recasts the relationship between these two 'poles' of philosophical activity will prepare the way for a certain revision in what we might understand by 'ontology'. This revision will be our concern both in Chapter 6 and again in the conclusion, where we shall inquire into the metaphilosophical, or ethical, effects of the idea of anomalous individuation.

### **Is there a science of the individual?**

To begin with, it is necessary to provide some kind of characterization of what the problem of individuation has generally been taken to signify. This problem can be initially stated, in all its indeterminacy, as: What makes an individual an individual? The weight of this indeterminacy is felt most acutely in the nature of the 'makes', which can and has taken myriad philosophical forms, from the perceptual to the phenomenological, from the theological to the corpuscular, and perhaps most importantly, manifests a tendency to oscillate between the four Aristotelian causes (material, formal, efficient, final). It has been argued that the notion of individuation emerged alongside an image of philosophy as a search after conditions of intelligibility, whose central requirement was that of accounting for the division or differentiation of the real into distinct, discernible or determinate entities. This attempt at determining the 'correlates' of thought, and at securing this grasp by accounting for how thought could carve the real at its joints (how thought and being could ever enter into a relationship of adequation with respect to determinate unities), has of course taken innumerable forms, expressed by such eminently philosophical questions as: 'What is *an* object?', 'What is *a* thing?', 'What is *a* name?'

In this light, the Aristotelian configuration of the problem of individuation could be indicated as its inaugural, albeit unachieved, statement, containing *in nuce* several aspects of a debate that in many respects is coterminous with the history of ontology. Moreover, within this configuration, the investigation of the processes underlying the constitution and destitution of individual forms is always subsumed, in the last instance, by the categorial determination of the relationship between

the universality sought by knowledge (or of what can be predicated regarding the real) and the particular cases encountered in an empirical domain. The question of individuation is thereby almost immediately assimilated by the question of specification. As Bruno Pinchard writes:

There would not have been a thought of individuation without the philosophical decision, characteristic of Hellenic thought, to identify *science*, *intelligibility*, and the search for the *universal*. The reciprocity between the requirement of universality and the constitution of a scientific object is the absolute condition of the Aristotelian reflection on individuation. Moreover, this condition seems strictly required for any philosophy of individuation.<sup>2</sup>

What is at stake in this intersection of individuality, universality, reality and intelligibility? In Aristotle, we are dealing with (at least) two modalities of individuation. I have already referred to one of these modalities as *genetic*. It may be registered in Aristotle's physics, morphology and zoology, and more generally in the very idea of a science of generation and corruption. The other is *epistemic*, and it is deployed in Aristotle's theories of abstraction and predication. Without venturing here into the vicissitudes of the interaction between these two modalities, we must, at the very least, note the manner in which it is sustained throughout by a hylemorphic theory of individuation. Theoretical experience is always confronted by composites of matter and form. *Science*, which operates by the twofold practice of abstraction and predication, is concerned with the intellection of substances, or, more drastically, with the extraction of form. Yet individuality itself, in both its genetic and epistemic guises, is distinguished by its dependence on matter, by its being inextricable from composition. This is the sense in which matter itself could come to be considered as the principle of individuation (most famously in Aquinas' notion of *materia signata*). This twofold requirement of universality, on the one hand, and of a material principle of individuation, on the other, is the impasse proper to Aristotle and the heirs of his understanding of individuation.

Whilst the order of knowledge or predication, with its threefold system of nomination, definition and judgment, can be said to begin with the impure perception of singular composites – which is why it is characterized as *abstraction* – nothing, that is to say nothing essential, nothing of the order of *οὐσια* can be predicated of the individual itself, whose being is irredeemably marked by matter and accident. As Porphyry, setting up the ladder of the 'predicables' that would come to be

known as 'Porphyry's tree', states in the *Isagoge*, his introduction to Aristotle's *Categories*, individuals, 'which are predicated of one alone ... are infinite':

This is why Plato exhorts us to stop going down from the most general to the most specific, to go down through the intermediary levels and to divide by differences. He tells us to leave the infinite [individuals] alone. For there is no knowledge of them.<sup>3</sup>

As Aristotle had already noted in *Metaphysics Z*: 'the definition of an individual is always precarious, and, in effect, a veritable definition is not possible'.<sup>4</sup> Definition, in this instance synonymous with knowledge, can only ever hope to extract a substantial identity, or predicate a formal being, from the hylemorphic composites that constitute the object of physics; it can never attain true knowledge of these composites themselves, 'as such'. Even in its physical use, where it functions both as 'substrate of interaction and as principle of distinction', the material principle of individuation can never permit the integral incorporation of individuals into the purview of science.<sup>5</sup> The entity (or composite substance) that actualizes a form or instantiates a species, and about which there may be a determinate act of predication, is nevertheless *this* entity only through the inscrutable work of matter. Matter itself is unknowable; unless, of course, it is already conceived as individuated (into atoms, particles, properties, and so on). But in this case, the entire argument crumbles under the weight of the many critiques that have been levied against it (from Scotus to Simondon), disputing it on the grounds that it always surreptitiously *prepares* matter *for* form, thus corrupting the separation *in principle* of the two sides of the composite. As Pinchard concedes, matter 'is a principle as active as it is unknowable, [a] discontinuous numerical quantity, which is the foundation *in progress* of individual diversity. The mystery of Aristotelian individuation lies here: the unthinkable is its motor, non-being is its cause.'<sup>6</sup> Thus, the articulation of being and thought under the aegis of the Aristotelian ideal of intelligibility results in the impasse that the only intelligibility of the individual, its only science, depends on its individuation in and by matter, the unintelligible *par excellence*.

According to Pinchard's presentation of the Aristotelian tradition, we are thus faced with an overdetermination of the *genetic* modality of individuation by the *epistemic* one. In genesis, as in the knowledge and predication thereof, the principle of individuation turns out to reside in what is most obscure, matter. The determination of what

is proper to thought – the binding of thought to the question of universality – generates an impasse in the interrogation of the relationship between being and individuality. This relationship becomes explicitly thematized only within mediaeval Scholasticism, and specifically in the work of Duns Scotus. In light of recent scholarship focusing on the contribution of Scotist philosophy to the genealogy of modern metaphysics conceived as a philosophy of representation, we are in a position to add another element to our preparatory survey.

### Univocity, haecceity and the birth of the object

The Scotist revolution, as regards both ontology and individuality, could in certain respects be characterized as a radicalization of the ideal of intelligibility belonging to Aristotelian science. In this sense, and despite the significance that Deleuze accorded it as a precursor of an ontology of difference, Scotus's philosophy is fiercely *epistemic*, or rather, it is altogether indifferent to the question of production (as opposed to divine creation), constituting instead a thoroughly *abstract* ontology.<sup>7</sup> This Scotist revolution is inseparable from a certain interpretation of the thesis that affirms the convertibility of being and unity, a thesis much later vehemently supported by Leibniz, and distilled into his well-known ontological motto: '*ce qui n'est pas un être, n'est pas véritablement un être*', what is not *a* being, is not truly a *being*.<sup>8</sup>

In contrast to the Aristotelianism, exemplified in Porphyry, that left both being and individuality outside of the realm of the predicable – the first as supra-generic or equivocal, the second as infra-specific or unintelligible – Scotus seeks to give full rights of metaphysical citizenship both to being *and* to individuality, in an attempt to eliminate the gap between (individual) reality and (conceptual) intelligibility still present in Aristotle, thus setting the stage for Ockham's nominalism as a philosophy of radical singularity, of individuality without a principle of individuation.<sup>9</sup> In the midst of a treatment which also provides a strong critique of the material principle of individuation,<sup>10</sup> Scotus forwards the radical thesis that nothing beyond the individual 'itself' – or rather, what he calls a 'real factor' within the individual – can account for its individuality. In so doing, he also presents us with a cross-section or recapitulation of the alternative stances to the problem of individuation thrown up by the tradition. Following the order of questions in his *Ordinatio*, the principle of individuation is *not*: (1) substance; (2) negation; (3) existence; (4) quantity; (5) matter. What Scotus provides as the principle of individuation, what he somewhat misleadingly calls the *ultimate determination*

*of form* – and which his followers would rechristen with the rather more fortunate name of *haecceity* – is the non-decomposable factor that ‘reduces’ an indifferent common essence (for example, humanity) to its thisness (for example, Socrates).

At first, this seems a meagre result for a philosophy that has been said to stake a legitimate claim to the status of a revolution. Yet it is not just in the critical destruction of the inherited principles of individuation that the force of Scotus’s argument lies, but precisely in the claim that the singular or individual is intelligible *as such*; that, whilst the universality of abstraction is itself a product of intellection, both the indifferent essence of a being (its *natura communis*) and its thisness (*haecceitas*) are positively real and intelligible. Neither of them, we must also note, are explained by *solo numero* difference: the former is the bearer of a quidditative unity that is less than numerical, whilst the latter is itself the reason for numerical difference.<sup>11</sup>

Arguably, this result is only a relatively minor corollary of what, if we are to follow Deleuze, is Scotus’s principal contribution to ontology, the thesis of univocity.<sup>12</sup> However, it is in the treatment of the principle of individuation that the convertibility of being and unity becomes most apparent and its momentous effects are most readily witnessed. Metaphysics attains its own unity and independence, from theology and physics respectively, by constituting the unity of its object, in the form of an *ens* (being), *res* (thing), or *aliquid* (something). The two ‘non-categories’ at each end of Porphyry’s tree of predicables, ‘being’ and ‘individuality’, are folded into each other to produce being (in the sense of the French *l’étant*, the Latin *ens*, or the German *das Seiende*) as the proper object of metaphysics. Metaphysics, regarded as a science of the *ens qua ens*, that is, as the science of something ‘common, total, and [absolutely] universal’, is nevertheless threatened by its collapse into indeterminacy in the face of the multiple, equivocal significations of being and unity. Its question thus becomes, to quote Boulnois: ‘What must unity be, so that it may permit being to become the unified object of a single science?’<sup>13</sup> The Scotist answer lies in treating being as a transcendental object common to all of its genera and manifestations. Being, the most common, is thus also the abstract or transcendental form of unity itself, applying both to the *quidditas* or *natura communis* of a being *and* to its *haecceitas* – both of which Scotus in fact regards as entities. Thus, the principle of individuation is overlaid by an instance of transcendental unity (the *ens*) which, as Boulnois remarks, reduces real beings to their concept, or perhaps more radically, makes the two indiscernible. Ontology is constituted here by the abstract concept, in the convertibility of being and unity.

The Aristotelian impasse concerning the science of individuality is thereby recast by Scotus and in a certain sense superseded. Not only is the individual *in principle* integrally intelligible, but the science of being is itself unified by the constitution of the abstract or transcendental unity of its object. What is particularly noteworthy here, apart from the anticipation of the radical transformation that both individuation and univocity will undergo in Deleuze's work, is how Scotus transforms the guiding traits of the Aristotelian philosophy of individuation. The unification of ontology or metaphysics as science is predicated, it appears, on a drastic foreclosure of the genetic dimension, the very dimension that contributed both to the strength and the ambiguity of Aristotle's account. Although cloaked by the opacity of matter, the Aristotelian principle of individuation presented us with the effort to combine the genetic and the epistemic, in other words, with the attempt to attain knowledge of the individuals *in process*. The Scotist account, on the contrary, signalling as it does the superimposition of being and thought in the transcendental unity of a concept of the *ens* within a unified science of ontology, appears quite indifferent to the very problem of a comprehension of genesis. To paraphrase the paradox at the heart of Olivier Boulnois's latest work on Scotus, significantly entitled *Being and Representation*, metaphysics as transcendental ontology only becomes a science when it lets go of a rich and equivocal perception of being in favour of the *aliquid*, the mere 'something' which is marked by neither existence nor non-existence; that is, it only becomes a science of being in its indifference to the real articulations of being, and *a fortiori* to the generations of individuality.<sup>14</sup> It is worth noting that, as we shall see with Deleuze in Chapter 6, one of the key moves within that speculative line which we have referred to as the ontology of anomalous individuation is in fact to persevere in this thinking of the unity of being and concept, but to do so *from the standpoint of individual difference*, thus reversing the primacy of the categorial apparatus (which now becomes the object of a transcendental genesis) and undoing the purely abstract unity of being for the sake of an active affirmation of univocity.

That Boulnois views the outcome of Scotus's project as the veritable commencement of a metaphysics of representation – in a trajectory that finds both its achievement and its crisis in Kant's critique and its notion of the object – is of considerable interest for our own project. For it is precisely in the irruption of the question of production as *heterogenesis* – of production *of* and *from* the different – into the apparatus of critique, that we would like to exhibit the formation of the kind of problematic wherein the contours of an ontology of anomalous individuation begin

to appear. Leaving the details of the relationship between representation, critique and individuation to Chapter 1, let us simply note the specificity of Kant's position *vis-à-vis* the complex of questions outlined above, and conclude with a brief discussion bearing on the effects of the notion of anomalous individuation upon the problem of ontological difference.

If we take Boulnois's bold thesis on board – to wit, that there is a fundamental genealogical continuity between Scotus and Kant – we can comprehend how the project of critique, in its strict limitation of the unity of metaphysics inaugurated by Scotus, prepares the way for the irruption of an ontology of production and a renewed concern with what we referred to as the genetic modality of individuation. By replacing the transcendental unity of the *ens commune* with the transcendental object (object =  $x$ ) construed as the formal requirement for empirical cognition, Kant poses austere constraints upon the univocity of the concept, specifying the modalities and extent of its application, and thereby linking the formal abstraction of the transcendental both to a certain form of process (the determination of the concept) and to the question of its outside (the dependence of the concept on intuition). Or, to put it in a slightly paradoxical manner, by effectuating a certain closure of theoretical cognition, understood in its autonomy from theological legislation and authority, and operating under the aegis of the unity of the concept, it transforms and arguably radicalizes the question of what lies beyond – or to put in Porphyry's terms – 'beneath' the concept.

Introducing temporality into the formation of the concept, Kantian critique brings the question of genesis back into philosophy conceived as a science of the intelligible, but it does so in the guise of a reflection far removed from Aristotelian notions of generation and morphogenesis. The abstract determination of the pure ontology of the object, as inherited from Scotus, is thus tendentially undermined, and the question of the affinity between the productivity of the intellect and the productivity of nature becomes acute; calling forth, with a certain dose of inevitability, as though it had already programmed its emergence, a philosophy of the genesis *of* the intellect to complement the account of genesis *in* the intellect, in the shape of Schelling's affirmation of a parallelism obtaining between nature–philosophy and transcendental idealism understood as complementary approaches to the originary phenomenon of productivity.

It is thus in the process of binding the problem of individuation – together with its 'twin', the problem of universals – to the unity of the concept in representation, that is, by effectively equating the problem of

individuation with that of objectification, that Kant comes up against a new limit to what we have referred to as the epistemic modality of individuation. My claim, which will be substantiated in Chapter 1, is that the experience of this limit is both occasioned and specified by the concept of a natural purpose (or self-organizing entity) in the *Critique of Judgment*. This limit forces Kant into the awkward but eventually fecund position of claiming that, in the organic, we encounter something which is not of the order of the possible, something that judgment cannot bring under a determinate concept, and which therefore, though it might fulfil a symbolic function within the economy of thought, cannot be truly incorporated within the domain of the intelligible. Though there is no science of the individual in Kant, science as such is only possible if the individual can be brought under the conceptual jurisdiction of the understanding in the form of an object of representation. However, no science, no universality or intelligibility *stricto sensu*, can be had of the individual as self-organized entity. The limit of the intelligible, however, is no longer to be found solely in the non-categorical inefability of the singular, but is now characterized in terms of *production*. Within the Critical philosophy it is thus the *genesis* of the individual that poses the real problem. It is in this regard that, albeit negatively, Kant's approach to the question of the organic sets the stage for those philosophies that seek to join the interrogation of individual difference to an inquiry into the operations of ontogenesis.

## Individuation and the ontological difference

The paradoxical status of the organic – the non-concept of a non-object, or the idea of a chimera – can in part be explained, as we shall see in Chapter 1, by Kant's fidelity to hylemorphism, a fidelity registered by Martin Heidegger in his crucial essay 'Kant's Thesis About Being'.<sup>15</sup> And yet what Heidegger ignores is precisely the effects of Kant's treatment of the kind of individuality that generates the problem of teleology upon the restricted concept of individuation as objectivity, and in turn upon the 'age-old prevailing meaning of being (constant presence)'.<sup>16</sup> Now, it might at first seem bizarre to claim that the introduction of the problem of the organic can trouble the impact of Heidegger's reading. However, if we consider the manner in which the thesis of ontological difference comes to be stated through and against the philosophy of representation – that is, by taking Kant as the culmination of an entire metaphysical sequence – the consequences of ignoring the problematic status within Kant's own work of genesis in general and self-organization in particular become apparent.

In the essay on Kant, Heidegger arrives at his statement of the ontological difference by excavating the renowned thesis that being is not a predicate. He reads it as saying that being is not a *real* predicate. As he puts it: 'Reality is for Kant not actuality but rather substantiality'.<sup>17</sup> And further: 'We represent and place before ourselves the substantive content of a thing in its concept.' We can thus see how Heidegger wishes to turn Kant's allegedly 'negative/defensive' thesis into an argument for the non-substantiality of being, and further towards the ultimate claim that being (for Kant!) lies beyond representation, that it is not something 'over against', that *it is no thing*. Whence Heidegger's concise statement of the enigma of ontological difference: 'Being cannot *be*. Were it to be, it would no longer remain being but would become a being, an entity.'<sup>18</sup>

We can now schematically summarize the three moments in this doctrinal sketch of the ontology of individuation. In the first, Aristotelian, one, being remains equivocal or supra-generic and individuality lies beneath the grasp of the intelligible. In the Scotist moment, being and unity are convertible in the figure of the *ens commune*, as transcendently unified and unifying object of metaphysics. With the upsurge of the ontological difference, we encounter the figure of being beyond individuality, the being that is beyond 'a' being and beyond all beings. Thus, in terms of the coupling of 'Being and Thought', the 'thesis' (or, more faithfully, the question) of ontological difference runs precisely counter to the initial ideal of intelligibility as a coincidence of thought and being in the individual; an ideal which, as we saw, rests on the aporetic participation of matter in individuation. Heidegger's statement can indeed be read as a call finally to have done with the problem of individuation, with that convertibility of being and unity lying at the heart of Western metaphysics; to suspend the question 'What are beings?' and the ontology of presence and subjectivity that subtend it for the sake of a wholly other thinking. Yet the very formulation of the thesis shows that the being of being is invoked against a seemingly inevitable formulation of the problem of individuation – that is, in terms of the fully present and constituted being of 'a' being, of 'an' entity. In this regard, the formulation of ontological difference may be regarded as the philosophical obverse of the convertibility of being and unity, and its statement as the reversal of Leibniz's motto, which is indeed what Heidegger's own emphasis ('Being cannot *be*') suggests.

But this is also why, rather than constituting the matrix of post-metaphysical speculation, or rather *thinking*, the entire Heideggerian problematic of the ontological difference, so redolent of negative theology,

can be shown to be parasitic on a very definite, and by no means inevitable, model of individuation – to wit, the one that takes the form of representation or ‘enduring presencing’.<sup>19</sup> As I shall attempt to show, especially in Chapters 5 and 6, an ontology founded on the genealogy and critique of traditional approaches to the problem of individuation is by the same token a reconsideration of the ontological difference, such that the latter is not negatively founded on the concession of a kind of regional hegemony to the ontic register of representation or presence. Though it may perhaps be the ‘bad conscience’ of philosophy, as Bruno Pinchard remarks, the problem of individuation is by no means a sort of original sin of thought. Neither categorial specification nor represented objectivity can be deemed to monopolize the speculative seizure of individuation. In other words, it is only by working *through* the problem of individuation – specifically, by assessing both its genetic and epistemic modalities and questioning the convertibility of being and unity – that ontology can attain a concept of differential production or heterogenesis that is *not* based on the negative presupposition of a supposedly ‘given’ but nevertheless ‘fallen’ or ‘corrupt’ modality of individuation (be this representation, presence, embodiment, subjectivity, or whatever). It is only then that the following words can ring true:

Because we think without origin, and without destination, difference becomes the highest thought, but we cannot think it *between* two things, between a point of departure and a point of arrival, nor even between being and beings. Difference cannot be affirmed as such without corroding the two terms which then cease to retain it, without itself ceasing its passage through assignable terms. Difference is the true logos, but logos is the errancy that suppresses fixed points – indifference is its pathos.<sup>20</sup>

In order to provide some purchase on what distinguishes the ontology of anomalous individuation from the theme of the ontological difference, as well as from the other approaches to individuation rehearsed above, let us now anticipate, by way of three cardinal theses gleaned from the work of Gilbert Simondon and Gilles Deleuze, the basic traits of the philosophical approach that will be the object of Part II of this work.

(1) *Thesis of Ontological Excess*. Being is both more than one and less than, or not yet, one. It is *preindividual* and exceeds its differentiation into bounded individuals, whether these be objects, subjects, organisms, or whatever. The status of being is that of a *problematic field*, populated by

inconsistent tendencies or potentials of which constituted individuals are solutions. These solutions are always partial and relative, remaining open to the problematic or 'inconsistent' excess of being. In other words, individuation is inexorably caught up in a dialectic of deficit and excess.

(2) *Thesis of Asymmetry*. The ontology of anomalous individuation is a philosophy of production, of what Miguel de Beistegui has perspicuously termed onto-hetero-genesis. It does not construct its account of individuation by extrapolating from constituted individuals to constituting processes, that is, by assuming a relationship of resemblance or analogy between formed, bounded entities and the operations that produce them. Inasmuch as individuating operations resolve inconsistencies in preindividual being, an understanding of them in terms of the primacy of individuals as products or solutions would obfuscate the very question of production. All the categories hitherto employed to grasp the individual are themselves subject to this primacy of ontogenesis. Subject and Object, Space and Time, Matter and Form, Universal and Particular, and perhaps above all, Being and Beings, must all be grasped as arising in individuation, from a preindividual being that is best described in terms of its problematicity and metastability. With regard to the processes of individuation themselves, the concepts designed to express them must be operational or relational concepts that do not rest on the predetermined properties of constituted individuals.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, any attempt at fashioning a concept of individuation starting from individuals themselves ignores that it is never monadic or independent individuals that are the outcomes of ontogenesis, but rather individual–environment complexes.

(3) *Thesis of Anomalous or An-archic Individuation*. The project of grounding the constitution of individuals in a *principle* of individuation is founded on an illegitimate inversion of ontogenesis, resulting in ascribing to a term *within* the process, most often a term reputedly untouched by the operations of individuation, the qualities and properties required to account for constituted individuals. Both Aristotelian hylemorphism (in its presupposition of form and matter as distinct terms within the operation of individuation) and atomism (with its presupposition of basic indivisible elements at the heart of all material transformations) err in this respect, providing principles which, whilst they appear to address individuation, are but a redundant reflection of the properties and qualities *already assigned* to individuals themselves. The 'ground' of individuation is instead to be found in unequal tendencies and disparate relations which have themselves been

generated by prior processes of individuation, and whose integration or reduction is to be considered as the sufficient reason for the production of provisionally delimited, actual individuals.

In light of these three theses, difference does not lie *between* being and beings, but is rather to be located in those operations that make the preindividual pass into the individuated. In the wake of the critiques of individuality offered by Simondon and Deleuze, ontology is reconfigured as a theoretical practice which cannot remain satisfied with either denying the hegemony of the individual or invoking its absolute, inscrutable other, with suspending the ontic authority of representation or clamouring for its apophatic annihilation. Instead, it is aimed at espousing, articulating and counter-effectuating the very movement of the constitution of individuality, something that, as we shall see in the discussion of the concept of transduction in Chapter 5, is not to be separated from the movement constituting thought itself.

To recapitulate in a somewhat polemical register, once again anticipating insights that will only be corroborated by our more detailed conceptual investigations in Part II, the ontology of anomalous individuation can thus be regarded as: (1) an inversion of Aristotelianism: genesis precedes and produces intelligibility; (2) a radicalization of univocity: being is now conceived as differential production and affirmation, rather than indifferent abstraction; (3) a transformation of the transcendental: passing from conditions of *possibility* to conditions of *realization*, the transcendental is reconfigured as an asubjective and ontogenetic preindividual field.

But these statements still remain imperfect approximations of our theme, depending as they do on an excessively abstract demarcation from past paradigms within the philosophy of individuation. To grasp the real stakes at play in the philosophical configuration we have chosen to call the ontology of anomalous individuation, it is necessary to approach it at a far more definite level, where it produces concepts and constructs operations that truly shift the traditional terrain of the interrogation of individuality. In order to attain this level, however, we must first excavate the singular matrix out of which a new paradigm in the philosophy of individuation may emerge. As we hope to show, whilst the Aristotelian, Scotist and Heideggerian moments sketched above retain their significance and, in varying ways, their influence upon our approach, it is starting from a far more circumscribed problematic – one that in fact is not explicitly concerned with the classical problem of individuation – that the constitution of a contemporary ontology of

individuation can be sketched out. This modern problematic is that of self-organized beings, as set out by Kant in the *Critique of Judgment*. In Part I, by considering this aspect of Kant's work and some critical responses to it, we will thus be concerned with drawing out the consequences of thinking individuation as *organization*, as well as with the effects of positing the *organic* as the *anomalous* instance of an autonomous organization in the heteronomous world of purely mechanical causes and our knowledge thereof. Whilst we will exhibit the way in which Kant's separation of autonomous and heteronomous modalities of individuation is the object of numerous and varied philosophical critiques, we nonetheless want to demonstrate that the very notion of a being in nature that *individuates itself*, in the specific form given it by Kant, is the harbinger of a momentous revolution in the philosophy of individuation, one that will take it from an almost exclusively epistemic focus to a sustained engagement with the question of ontogenesis *qua* heterogenesis.

Thus, it is only after Kant – which is to say beyond Kant and, in a sense, despite Kant – that philosophy can deploy itself as a 'theatre of production'. As Part I will lay out, it is the crisis opened up by the anomaly of the organic that leads thought to interrogate a domain of preindividual productivity which is neither mechanical nor vitalist, and in turn to consider philosophical activity itself not as contemplative *theoria*, but as itself an individuating process, a practice of *construction* that seizes, relays and reconfigures non-philosophical processes of ontogenesis. As Part II will demonstrate by addressing the writings of Peirce, Simondon and Deleuze, philosophy becomes a theatre of production to the extent that the relationship between Being and Thought, between ontological processes and philosophical concepts, is freed from the presuppositions of individuality and given over to the manifestation, investigation and construction of the operations of individuation. The suspension of principles of individuation thus entails the loss of the transparency of categorical capture and the abandonment of the mission which demanded that philosophy guarantee the intelligibility of the real. To borrow from Deleuze, and anticipate our elaboration of these ideas in Chapter 6, this means that, with regard to the problem of individuation, philosophy no longer reflects (upon) constituted individualities, but must rather *dramatize* the processes of individuation.

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