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Paper for the 15th International Deleuze and Guattari Studies Conference and Camp

Title : *The dividual remainder. For a Deleuzian history of dividuality*

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Abstract : Control, as a form of power, operates through the dividual modulation of experience. In opposition to the enclosed confinements proper to disciplinary societies, tendencies of dematerialisation present in contemporary capitalism, such as immaterial labour, big data or even conceptual art, indicate the rise of a rapidly shifting system of varying geometry. Production, for instance, no longer takes place solely inside a rigid and stratified milieu (the factory), but can emerge in the midst of a self-transmuting molding in continuous division (the enterprise, the start-up). If contemporary authors, such as Joshua Simon (2013), Gerald Raunig (2016), or Pablo Rodríguez (2019), have explored this dividual partition of experience in relation to art practices, financial debt, the digital world, and the rise of the informational *episteme*, a properly deleuzian account of this process is yet to be explored. The aim of our presentation is to sketch a philosophical genealogy of dividuality following Deleuze's work, particularly between 1966 and 1968, on figures such as Henri Bergson, Baruch Spinoza, and Gilbert Simondon. More precisely, we think that a « Deleuzian history of dividuality » can be established from a focus on categories such as quality, quantity and individuation according to three moments: 1. The determination of the indivisible character of qualitative multiplicity contained in *Bergsonism* (1966); 2. The quantitative divisibility proper to modal essences understood as *pars intensiva* developed in *Expressionism in Philosophy* (1968); 3. the adoption of the Simondonian philosophy of individuation in *Difference and Repetition* (1968), according to which indivisibility pertains solely to the fact that its constituting factors « do not divide without also changing in nature ». This genealogy could then not only provide elements of interest for thinking the ontology of control, but it could also trace historical elements that point to the undermining of this form of power, e.g. the notion of intensity defined as an intensive quantity.

One of the key insights from Deleuze's short text *The post-scriptum to societies of control* is to state specifically that control, as a form of power emerging at the end of the XXth century, operates through a dividual modulation of experience. In opposition to the enclosed confinements proper to the the foucauldian analysis of disciplinary societies, Deleuze saw control as a kind of logical mutation to this paradigm : instead of the analogical moldings that characterized the XVIIIth and XIXth century institutions (such as the family, the school, the factory, the hospital, or above all the prison), **our time would instead be characterized by new digital modulations proper to a rapidly shifting system of varying geometrical, temporal and informational dimensions.** As Joshua Simon argues in *Neomaterialism* (2013) we can get a sense of this transition if we pay attention to some tendencies of dematerialisation present in contemporary capitalism, such as immaterial labour, big data or even conceptual art. Production, for instance, no longer takes place solely inside a rigid and stratified milieu (the factory), but can emerge in the midst of a self-transmuting instance in continuous division (the enterprise, or the start-up). What is central to Deleuze here is the emergence of a new mode of subjectivity : the dividual or the sample. As he says « In societies of control individuals become dividuals, and masses become samples, data, markets, or banks ». Following this hypothesis, contemporary subjectivity would be increasingly less bound by the outlines of what we conceive as an individual in modern terms. Our behaviors and relations (with oneself, with others and with objects) would be closer to a certain experience of division. If Deleuze is not the first to think the dividual character of subjectivity in general, he sure is the first to give an onto-genetical significance to this term. After exploring briefly the horizon of the dividual in contemporary theory, I intend to trace a genealogy for this term in Deleuze's first period, more precisely between 1966-68, in his work on *Bergsonism*, *Expressionism in philosophy* and *Difference and repetition*. I will thus propose an exploration on the meaning of the dividual through 3 different registers : quality, quantity and individuation, looking to map the complexity of a very curious conceptual dynamics and to move maybe towards a Deleuzian history of dividuality.

1. The dividual in contemporary theory

From the classical works of contractualism and taking into account the motif of the portrait and the adoption of perspective as a pictorial technique in the 16th century, the modern notion of the individual seems marked by the reunion of the singular and the personal as fundamental traits, being conceived in contrast to society as a whole. In this sense, the modern individual appears as a substantial ground untouched by any external division whatsoever. However, as Gerald Raunig has showed, this modern conception comes is in fact from ancient sources, for exemple Cicero's

translation of Plato's *Timaeus*, where the individual is already coextensive to some sort of ontological division. The individual then is not indifferent to division, but a certain experience of division seems to precede the individual itself. This seems evident also from fields such as psychotherapy and anthropology. For example, one of the fathers of anti-psychiatry, RD **Laing** (2010), observes that schizoid individuals do not simply feature a divided self, but they experiment with various types of division. On the other hand, Meyer Fortes, in his 1973 article « On the concept of the person among the Tallensi », argues that the 'dividual' is a more elementary element of agency (both human and animal) than the individual'. Also, McKim **Marriott** in his 1976 work *Hindu Transactions: Diversity without Dualism* argues that some South Asian social systems display a dividual point of action and transaction that is continually transferred in order to create new arrays of rank, purity, and liberation from the material world. In his 1988 seminal work *The Gender of The Gift*, Marilyn Strathern describes, in contrast to the Western idea of a « christian individual », how the Melanesian person constitutes itself as a dividual in a complex array of social and economical exchanges. More recently Pablo Manolo Rodriguez in his 2019 book *Words in things* contends that contemporary practices, such as biotechnologies, digital culture, and financial capitalism, render the modern experience of the individual as something coextensive to a set of dividual practices, in a relationship that is always marked by tensions and ambiguities (think of the tensions proper to biogenetic tracing, social media and financial debt as modes of our contemporary episteme)

To resume, Dividuality in contemporary theory seems to pertain to some kind of split, partition or point of transaction or interaction within the foundation, or refoundation, of the modern notion of the individual. The dividual highlights in this sense a certain kind of agency and multiplicity at the base, but also beyond, the idea of a substantial, self-identical individual. Be it psychically, socially, anthropologically or epistemologically the individual seems, under this perspective, preceded by a certain dividuality at its core. What could be the resonance here with Deleuze's text then ?

2. A genealogy of dividuality ?

First of all, we have to remember that the postscriptum is not the only place where Deleuze introduces the notion of the dividual. In 1983 in the Glossary of *Cinema 1*, the dividual is already defined as « that which is only divided by changing qualitatively », this is, by changing in kind or nature. The dividual, in this sense, appears not just as a cut, a partition or a separation, but denotes a curious dynamic, more precisely, an internal process of change and variation. In this manner, the

definition of the dividual closely resembles Deleuze and Guattari's description of an intensive multiplicity. For example in ATP 2, D&G state that « an intensive multiplicity is composed of particles **that do not divide without changing in nature**, distances that do not vary without conforming another multiplicity ». Furthermore, a smooth space features also a sort of dividual logic. D&G say in ATP 14 : « Not only is that which populates a smooth space a multiplicity that changes in nature when it divides—such as tribes in the desert — but smooth space itself, desert, steppe, sea, or ice, is a multiplicity of this type (a multiplicity that changes in nature when divided) ». If intensive multiplicities play a central role in Deleuze's ontology, denoting in a sense the proper agents of actualization, what could be then the role of the dividual, of dividuality, in this context ?

Certain readers of Deleuze tend to understand the dividual as the breakdown of the individual following simply the idea of 'a partition within the subject itself'. In this sense, Williams defines the dividual as 'a physically embodied **human** subject that is endlessly divisible and reducible to data representations' (Williams, 2005: 104). By the same trait, Maurizio Lazzarato (2010) see the dividual as a key component of certain processes of desubjectivation proper to the production of wealth in contemporary capitalism. None of these understandings seem to take into account the onto-genetical significance of the dividual, significance that is pointed out by the resonance the dividual holds in regards to the logic of intensive multiplicities. « Something that does not divide without also changing in nature » refer only to the breakdown of subjectivity in the midst of control, or does it point also to a new understanding of subjectivity ? I think that we can get a better understanding of this question if we retrace the genealogy of the dynamics of the dividual in Deleuze's work on Bergson and Spinoza, and even to his reception of Simondon in DR

1 Bergsonism

One of the key features of Deleuze's reading of Bergson is the importance given to the notion of multiplicity. Following Bergson's distinction between two kinds of multiplicities in *Time and Free will* (one spatial, discrete, numerical, another temporal, qualitative, and marked by continuity), and linking this distinction to a riemannian understanding of varieties in non-euclidian geometry, Deleuze will define the qualitative character proper to duration as follows : « for Bergson, duration was not simply the indivisible, nor was it the nonmeasurable. Rather, it was that which divided only by changing in nature, that which was susceptible to measurement only by varying its metrical principle at each stage of the division ». Dividuality is thus present already in 1966 : a qualitative

multiplicity, an internal multiplicity of succession, fusion, organization, and heterogeneity, displays a dividual logic by the fact that it is precisely that which does not divide without also changing in nature. On top of that, this dynamic is thought by Deleuze as a « subjective » movement. Whereas "object" and « objective" denote for Deleuze that which does not change in kind when divided, duration is on the contrary synonymous with change in nature, with what Bergson will call real movement. Dividuality denotes change in the sphere of duration, structuring the qualitative significance of our profound psychical life. A feeling is the best example to understand this : Deleuze quotes Bergson in this respect :

A complex feeling will contain a fairly large number of simple elements; but as long as these elements do not stand out with perfect clearness, we cannot say that they were completely realized, and as soon as consciousness has a distinct perception of them, the psychic state which results from their synthesis will have changed for this very reason.

What Deleuze finds here is a sort of « energy » proper to duration : our psychical life is qualitatively different from an external space because it is not fully realized or actual, it's a virtuality in the course of being actualized, this is, in the course of a production that entails a change in its nature. In this sense, dividuality concerns a positive ontological trait of duration : it is by changing in nature at every stage of its division that actualization comes about as a differentiation. If this movement will ultimately characterize Bergson's *elan vital*, it is precisely due to the fact that life proceeds only « by dissociation, division, and dichotomy, », merging into the very movement of differentiation. The dividual, in the context of *Bergsonism*, marks thus the way of how Life « extracts » difference from itself, developing by this trait as a self-differentiating quality. Life, as the onto-cosmical extension of psychical duration, will then be equivalent of a transformative quality that does not divide without changing in nature, this is, by endlessly dividing into differences that change its own kind, a dynamic that in the context of Spinoza Deleuze will call « intensive ».

2 Expressionism in Philosophy

One of the central problems that Bergsonism opened and didn't quite solve was the status of intensity or intensive quantity. If Deleuze endorses Bergson's critique of intensity in *Time and Free will*, he's however very skeptical on this subject at the end of *Bergsonism* :

The critique of intensity in *Time and Free Will* is highly ambiguous. Is it directed against the very notion of intensive quantity, or merely against the idea of an intensity of psychic states? If it is true that intensity is never given in a pure experience, is it not then intensity that *gives* all the qualities with which we make experience?

In a sense, the resolution of this ambiguity will be further developed in the third part of *Expressionism in philosophy*, more precisely in what is known as the « Theory of the finite mode ». In this place a dividual conception of quality, already developed in *Bergsonism*, will be linked to the emergence of a distinctively non-numerical conception of quantity, what Deleuze will call an intensive quantity.

In his reading of Spinoza, Deleuze discusses the modal distinction as a way of accounting for the singularity of finite modes and their relation to the expression of substance. Finite modes are conceived as parts of the substance, but only as *pars intensiva*, this is, as internal degrees of power that continually modulate the expression of substance. Metaphysically this means that, in expression, substance remains univocally what it is, and at the same time, it is modally distinct from all its expressions. Modal essences are then distinguished from substance, yes, but only as intensities from a quality (think of how the distinct shades of a color are distinguished from one another and nonetheless are the same color). In a strict immanence between substance and modes there can be no gap, cut or partition between these terms. Difference has to account for both a continuity and a distinction. This is why modal essences are so important for Spinoza : substance is indivisible, yes, but it is not still, it is an expressive nature that produces an infinity of things in an infinite manner of ways. In this sense, modes, conceived as intensities, are the dividual components of a purely smooth substance : they are the product of a process that modulates the nature of the infinite in the emergence of its finite degrees of power. What is important to keep in mind here is that this « dividual » aspect of the expression of substance entails a certain conception of quantity. Following Spinoza's famous letter 12, this quantitative character can be described as « indefinite » and nonetheless susceptible of internal variations (a greater or a less) : Deleuze cites Spinoza

« certain things are said to be infinite or, if you prefer, indefinite, because they cannot be equated with any number, yet they can be conceived as greater or less.

Dividuality, in the context of Spinoza, implies thus not only an internal division of quality but also a quantitative non-numerical trait, a degree as a positive infinite-indefinite space of variation. In Spinoza this space accounts for a very special dimension, the variations of the power to affect and to be affected. If, on the one hand, an individual is composed by a determinate number of extensive parts under certain relations of motion and rest, on the other hand, an individual's affectivity or affect is to be found for Deleuze in the quantitative indefinite space opened up by its intensive essence. There are modes, like the circle diagram, which are finite in extensive magnitude, but infinite in composition. Such modes are **infinite because they are indefinite**. Oscillating between a

greater and a less, the indefiniteness of intensity determines a certain « elasticity » of the individual, an internal capacity under which the same essence is formed and deformed, a transformation determining a continuous variation in the very nature of the mode. Dividuality, present already in Deleuze's Spinoza, extends, by this trait, to the realm of an affective life, this is, a domain marked by the variations of a plastic nature, a nature whose endless divisions define our capacities in the midst of the oscillations of a greater or less power to act.

3 Difference and repetition

This dividual vision of quality and quantity pave the way for the introduction of the category of individuation. As we know, the problem of individuation is a central theme of DR. This process addresses a central question, following in a sense the previous work done on Bergson and Spinoza : what is the sufficient reason for the actualization of the virtual, for the passage from essence to existence. Individuation in this sense emerges as the act by which differential relations come into existence, becoming actualized by this trait. This, as Deleuze remarks, is accomplished through the power of intensity : « The essential process of intensive quantities is individuation. Intensity is individuating, and intensive quantities are individuating factors ». By adopting the Simondonian philosophy of individuation in the fifth chapter of DR, Deleuze shows that dividuality concerns a certain *operation*, an operation of resolution precisely undertaken by the indefinite space opened up by intensity. « Individuation emerges like the act of solving a problem, or -what amounts to the same thing - like the actualisation of a potential and the establishing of communication between dispartes ». Equating intensity this time to a potential and metastable energy, equivalence that we find already in his 1966 review of Simondon's thesis, the operational character of the dividual lies finally in the fact that it triggers an individuation as the resolution of a problematic, resolution that does not suppress the problem, but integrates its elements into a stable, finalized, actual state. The dividual lies finally as an operation at the foundation of the individual : the dynamics of dividuality, developed through Bergson and Spinoza, account in turn in DR for the resolution of a pre-individual field of singularities at the onto-genesis of the individuated self. Change in kind and an energetic perspective on affectivity are thus key elements to understand this operation : they are exemplary reunited in the domain of evolutionary developmental biology, more precisely in the morphogenesis of living beings.

The dividual reunites in this sense a clear onto-genetical scheme : a transformative quality, an indefinite quantity and an operation of resolution that engenders a response to a problem. A

deleuzian history of dividuality shows in consequence that the dividual is not just a political, psychical or anthropological notion, but also a conceptual dynamism essential to a philosophy of difference. In this manner, however, the *postscriptum* appears as a far cryptic text than initially. If individuals become dividuals in societies of control, it would seem that control operates through the same dynamism as the process of difference itself. Far from this being a positive or negative trait, this shows at least how deep the sphere of control goes : if disciplinary power concentrated on the molding of more stable, actual, more « modern » entities (the personal body, the enclosed institutions, identity as a whole), control focuses instead on the more genetical traits of individuality, targeting not the molding of « molar » entities, but the modulation of a dividual remainder, **a set of indefinite, creative, energetic and affective elements**. Control appears then as minor and molecular : it doesn't target the actual, but actualization ; it doesn't target the extensive, only the intensive, that indefinite space of affectivity ; it doesn't care about the given, but only about that by which the given is given, that capacity of resolution that every individual envelops. The individual in societies of control appears then as the subject of a cunning snake seeking to influence or conduct some fundamental traits of their life : transformation, mutation, change in kind, everything that Deleuze describes as belonging to the field of dividuality. Even if control targets this ontological aspect, its is perhaps here, in this genetical dimension of experience, that we might be able to seek the ways to underscore control itself. New operations, new sensations, new qualities, new indefinite spaces, new ways of solving problems *intensively*, in short, new dividualities, new modes of dividualation beyond the dividualations of control could short-circuit its expansion and influence. In any case, it seems to me that the dividual, contrary to some readings, marks a positive, and yet ambiguous, dynamic in our contemporary world : we have become subjects that do not divide without changing in nature, and that is not an absolute negative trait, only the starting point to think of our current condition.