DISSERTATION / DOCTORAL THESIS

Titel der Dissertation /Title of the Doctoral Thesis
„Moods in Transition"

verfasst von / submitted by

Mag.phil. Markus Wrbouschek

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doktor der Philosophie (Dr.phil.)

Wien, 2021 / Vienna 2021

Content

Introduction

This doctoral thesis addresses a set of (interrelated) concerns regarding contemporary conceptualisations of mood experiences in psychology. Despite the fact that moods have been a subject of theoretical consideration for a long time and that there exists a large number of definitions for moods (Luomala & Laaksonen, 2000), a consensus as to what mood experiences actually are is yet to be achieved. Among the conceptual challenges that mood experiences pose two stand out.

The first concerns what phenomenologists would call the intentional status of mood experiences, that is, the question of what mood experiences are experiences *of*? Mood theories in that regard fall into two broad categories: feeling theories and dispositional theories (Siemer, 2009). Feeling theories reject the idea that moods (like emotions proper) would be directed at anything at all. Instead they argue that moods are but somatic feelings which mirror the current endogenous state of an organism. Feeling theories of mood can be traced back all the way to James' influential 'What is an emotion?' (James, 1884). A contemporary variant of this view can be found for instance in the context of constructivist theories of emotions (Russell, 2003; Russell & Barrett, 1999), where moods are equated with core affective properties within a multi-level processual conceptualisation of emotions. In this view, core affect as such is regarded a most basic, pre-reflexive awareness of the body´s current physiological state. As such, it is not directed at anything per se and it is only through a secondary integration with higher order perceptual and cognitive processes that an emotional directedness at specific situations and objects emerges. On the other hand, dispositional theories (Siemer, 2009) argue that moods do in fact involve an orientation toward the world. However, most dispositional accounts of mood hold that moods are not directed at specific events or objects in the actor´s environment, but that they have a more general kind of world-directedness (Mitchell, 2018, p. 121). Specifically, dispositional theories claim that moods provide an orientational frame which facilitates emotional appraisals congruent with the mood state regarding more or less specific classes of objects and/or situations that the actor might face. As Mitchell (2018) shows, dispositional theories face a series of problems when trying to account for the specific intentional status of mood experiences. I discuss

these problems in some detail in paper two (see chapter 2 below). For the purpose of this introduction I just mention the following: the first objection to a dispositional view is derived from the motivational tendencies associated with moods. Mood states may influence behaviour without manifesting in specific emotional appraisals. Mitchell gives the example of "someone in an irritable mood trudg[ing] up the stairs, without necessarily having entered into the occurrent emotion of anger" (Mitchell, 2018, p. 120). Secondly, even if moods dispose one to feel certain emotions, this typically extends to a variety of different emotions. Thus, Mitchell asks what justifies the claim that these divergent emotions all relate to one and the same dispositional frame? This question leads to considering a third objection regarding what Mitchell calls the "felt phenomenology of moods" (Mitchell, 2018, p. 120). In this regard, moods have a distinct experiential profile, that is, there is a distinct quality to mood experiences which is felt independent from any occurrent emotional manifestation. Furthermore, the distinct feeling of being in a mood usually extends for longer time periods than is typical for emotions proper (Frijda, 1993).

The phenomenal or experiential profile of mood episodes has not been a concern specific to a dispositional theory of moods but is being discussed as a general challenge to any theory of moods. Feeling theories may provide an explanation for the source of this felt phenomenology by pointing to the overall state of the bio-physiological organism being mirrored by the specific feeling state. However, first-person accounts of moods usually entail a sense of relevance or meaningfulness as integral part of the experience. This in turn has led to regarding moods as a background feeling that expresses a fundamental concern of the individual. Jacobsen, for instance, coined the often-cited definition of mood as a "barometer of the ego state" (Jacobsen, 1957, p. 75). By referring to moods as a general indicator of one´s overall situation, the subjective feeling of relevance is justified in the absence of an external referent. A constructivist mood theorist might point out that the subjective sense of about-ness might also be due to a general tendency to ascribe meaning to phenomenal experiences. Accordingly, the apprehension of meaning would be satisfied in the integration of core affective stirrings with perceptive and cognitive elements in a constructionist account of emotions. However, in my doctoral thesis I pursue another direction. Taking a hint from Parkinson, Totterdell, Briner, & Reynolds' (1996) book on changing moods, I start

from an often overlooked aspect of mood´s experiential quality, namely the fact that moods typically are experienced as pervasive background feelings but at the same time as having an ephemeral, even oscillating or flickering quality. As such, the term 'mood' in everyday language is not only associated with a fundamental affective colouring of one´s experiential field (though this too is important as I argue at different points in the papers assembled in this doctoral thesis) but also with sometimes unexpected and irritating leaps and shifts in affective comportment. The semantic connotations of terms such as 'whim', 'fancy' or 'temper' insinuate that the sudden changes in affective tone are as much part of what constitutes moods as is the steady and monotonic background feeling quality that is usually highlighted with regard to moods. Parkinson, Totterdell, Briner, & Reynolds (1996) consequently objected a static view of moods and advocated for a transactional approach. In my doctoral thesis I develop an interdisciplinary perspective that takes the processual and dynamic character of moods as a crucial point of vantage. In doing so, I draw from three theoretical sources: first, I employ phenomenological investigations of mood experiences which have been an important part of recent developments in the cognitive sciences and philosophy of emotions. Building on Heidegger´s existential analysis of 'Befindlichkeit' (attunement or findingness, see chapter 1 regarding the translational issues regarding the term) in 'Sein und Zeit' ('Being and time', Heidegger, 1993) authors such as Elpidorou & Freeman (Elpidorou & Freeman, 2015; Freeman, 2014), Ratcliffe (2005), and Slaby (2017) have been working toward a theory of moods as fundamentally world-disclosing affective background structure. In their view – and despite differences in the specific accounts developed by these authors – moods belong to a most fundamental dimension of our being-in-the-world which pre-reflectively attunes us to our existential situation as finite beings. In all three papers assembled in this doctoral thesis I engage in a dialogue with these Heidegger-inspired approaches. Despite a certain affinity to their perspective my point of contention is that for a psychological theory of moods the philosophical reference to an ontologically primordial level of affectivity (moods proper) leads to neglecting the more fluid aspects of moods as experienced in everyday life. I do not contend the philosophical legitimacy of an ontological investigation of our human condition. Rather I argue that by emphasising the ontological affective

make-up of being-in-the-world, a specific transient quality of moods tends to get overlooked.

The embedded, embodied and enactive character of our relations to self and world is also at the centre of the second theoretical influence I am drawing from, namely contemporary developments in the cognitive sciences, which are being more widely recognised in psychology in recent years (Da Rold, 2018; Pouw & de Jong, 2015). Specifically, I refer to Colombetti´s (2017) concept of affective scaffolding which I discuss in paper 2.

My most important source of theoretical influence, however, comes from the work of French psychologist and philosopher of technology Gilbert Simondon (2020) whose work has become the conceptual lynchpin in my project (I develop this specifically in the first paper). Simondon´s main contribution to psychological theorising has been to challenge a certain preference within our field to focus on static phenomena (a cognitive content, an act accomplished, a perceptive unit, etc.) providing explanations for how these came into being in a backwards directed operation. According to Simondon such an approach runs risk of underestimating the potential of processes of individuation to bring forth a multiplicity of outcomes among which a given entity is but one resolution. Simondon´s own project is aimed at theorising individuation (the processual emergence of psychophysiological states, entities, etc.) from a point of view that does not presuppose the existence of already individuated beings. With regard to a theory of moods, I employ Simondon´s work to show that moods should not be conceptualised as states of a psychological system, but rather as experiential correlates of processes of individuation. Much of the work presented in the papers in this doctoral thesis revolves around giving a coherent argument for this abstract idea. Accordingly, paper 1 is centred on the question, how Simondon´s work can provide a conceptual framework for studying human experience. While mood experiences are not a focus in this paper specifically, the meta-theoretical exploration of Simondon´s work provides an important background for the examination of moods in paper 2 and 3. The second paper thus starts by discussing in some length the conceptual problems surrounding mood experiences which I addressed in the first part of this introduction. Based on the critical examination of the existing psychological literature on moods I then proceed by taking a look across the traditional borders of our discipline and by discussing the phenomenological and phil-

osophical approaches to moods. From this examination I draw the idea that moods might be about becoming relationally situated (more on this in paper 2). However, I also point out that the processual becoming of situatedness is sometimes being overshadowed by the ontological focus on 'being' and finding oneself already thrown into the world (Heidegger, 1993). From there, I turn to Simondon to develop a process theoretical perspective on individuation and the emergence of a subject relative to her associated milieu.

Paper 3 takes up where the previous paper finishes and addresses the theory of moods from a different and more practically oriented angle. There, I contextualise the processual perspective on moods with regard to the problematic of decision-making under conditions of uncertainty. Making reference to contemporary theories of modernisation and the motive of a growing need for practical orientation due to an erosion of traditional points of reference, I argue that moods might be seen as providing a transitional affective anchor in liminal times. At this point, the psychological investigation of mood experiences is opened up toward a social psychological and social theoretical reflection about the role that affectivity plays in a wider social context. Within the scope of this psychological project I have not been able to develop this transdisciplinary perspective fully; however, I will return to this point at the end of this doctoral thesis (conclusion and outlook) and show, how placing the theory of moods in transition within a wider theory of psychic and collective individuation is not only at the heart of Simondon´s project, but also provides interesting points of convergence with contemporary social-psychological work in the field of liminal theory (Stenner, 2017) and the broad field often referred to under the label of a 'turn to affect' (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010). Overall I hope to contribute to the understanding of the complex psychology of mood experiences but also to inspire a transdisciplinary dialogue concerning the role of affective experiences in open, transitional or liminal social environments.

References

Colombetti, G. (2017). The embodied and situated nature of moods. *Philosophia, 45*, 1437–1451. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11406-017-9817-0.

Da Rold, F. (2018). Defining embodied cognition: The problem of situatedness. *New ideas in psychology, 51*, 9–14. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.newideapsych.2018.04.001.

Elpidorou, A., & Freeman, L. (2015). Affectivity in Heidegger I: Moods and emotions in being and time. *Philosophy compass, 10*(10), 661–671. https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12236.

Freeman, L. (2014). Toward a phenomenology of mood. *The southern journal of philosophy, 52*(4), 445–476. https://doi.org/10.1111/sjp.12089.

Gregg, M., & Seigworth, G. (Eds.) (2010). *The affect theory reader.* Duke university press.

Heidegger, M. (1993 [1927]). *Sein und Zeit.* Niemeyer.

Jacobsen, E. (1957). Normal and pathological moods: Their nature and functions. *The psychoanalytic study of the child, 12*, 73-113. https://doi.org/10.1080/00797308.1957.11822803.

James, W. (1884). What is an emotion? *Emotion, 9*(34), 188-205. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2246769.

Luomala, H., & Laaksonen, M. (2000). Contributions from mood research. *Psychology and marketing, 17*(3), 195–233. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1520-6793(200003)17:3%3C195::AID-MAR2%3E3.0.CO;2-#.

Mitchell, J. (2019). The intentionality and intelligibility of moods. *European journal of philosophy, 27*(1), 118–135. https://doi.org/10.1111/ejop.12385.

Parkinson, B., Totterdell, P., Briner, R.B., & Reynolds, S. (1996). *Changing moods: The psychology of mood and mood regulation.* Longman.

Pouw, W.T.J.L., & de Jong, H.L. (2015). Rethinking situated and embodied social psychology. *Theory & psychology, 25*(4), 411–433. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354315585661.

Ratcliffe, M. (2005). The feeling of being. *Journal of consciousness studies, 12*(8–10), 43–60.

Siemer (2009). Mood experience: Implications of a dispositional theory of moods. *Emotion review, 1*(3), 256–263. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1754073909103594.

Russell, J. A., & Barrett, L. F. (1999). Core affect, prototypical emotional episodes, and other things called *emotion*: dissecting the elephant. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 76*(5), 805-819. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.76.5.805.

Simondon, G. (2020). *Individuation in light of notions of form and information.* University of Minnesota press.

Slaby, J. (2017). More than a feeling: Affect as radical situatedness. *Midwest studies in philosophy, XLI*, 7-26.

Stenner, P. (2017). *Liminality and experience: A transdisciplinary approach to the psychosocial.* Palgrave McMillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-27211-9.

Synopsis

The papers included in this dissertation have all been conceptualised and drafted by me as the first author. Ao.-Prof. Dr. Thomas Slunecko appears as the co-author on each of the papers and has been an inspirational and critical interlocutor in the development of the ideas presented in these papers as well as throughout the process of writing and revising the final versions of the texts.

The first paper (chapter 1) is based on a presentation given at the ISTP-conference in Copenhagen, August 23rd 2019. The final version of the paper has been published online-first on July 29th, 2020 and appeared in the peer-reviewed SAGE-journal *Theory & Psychology, 31*(1), 2021 (https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354320943294).

The second paper (chapter 2) has been accepted for publication February 11th, 2021 and published online-first March 1st, 2021. It appeared in Elsevier´s peer-reviewed journal *New Ideas in Psychology, 62* (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.newideapsych.2021.100857).

The third paper (chapter 3) has been accepted for publication in the peer-reviewed *International Review of Theoretical Psychologies* (IRTP) March 17th, 2021. It has been published in the journal´s first issue May 21st, 2021 (https://doi.org/10.7146/irtp.v1i1.127084).

Apart from minor adaptations in the layout, formalia and style of reference in the following chapters are consistent with how the articles first appeared in the respective publications. Resulting variations (citation, layout) in the following chapters are due to different conventions used in the respective journals.

Chapter 1) Tensed toward the collective: A Simondonian perspective on human experience in context

Authors

Markus Wrbouschek & Thomas Slunecko

Abstract

In this article, we use Gilbert Simondon's work on psychic and collective individuation in order to develop a process theoretical framework for studying human experience in context. We argue that experience should be conceptually understood as coextensive with the processual becoming of an individual human being. We further develop this by taking into account two complementary trajectories of becoming: psychic individuation and collective individuation. We will show how this can help us to understand the situatedness and collectivity of human experience.

In this article, we use Gilbert Simondon's work on psychic and collective individuation as a conceptual point of vantage in order to develop a process theoretical framework for studying human experience in context. We argue that experience—rather than being conceptualised as a property of a psychic apparatus (cognition, information processing, or the like)—should be conceptually understood as coextensive with the processual becoming of an individual human being. This is what Simondon (2007) calls psychic individuation. In order to present our proposal for a Simondonian approach to experience in context, we take the following argumenative steps: first we present Simondon's theory of individuation, focusing on the concepts of the preindividual and psychic individuation. We then elaborate how this framework applies to the problem of experience as the mode of operation of individuation specific to human beings.

When developing the theory of psychic individuation in Simondon, it will become clear that psychic individuation cannot, by itself, account for social life and collective experience. Simondon argues that psychic individuation does not encompass

being human in all its complexity. Rather, human life unfolds between two complementary trajectories of becoming: psychic individuation and collective individuation. In the third section, we consequently expand on our reading of Simondon in order to account for the situatedness and collectivity of human experience. Throughout the article, it is our aim to develop a theoretical framework for studying situated *experience* in psychology. We think that Simondon bridges the gap between psychological theorising on an individual level and a transindividual perspective focusing on social practice and collective experience. At the same time, he does not lose sight of the constitutive difference between "experience" as the basic unit of psychological research and collective life as it presents itself to sociology, and other disciplines. In this sense, Simondon is also an important source of inspiration for a transdisciplinary psychology (Stenner, 2017). Last but not least, we hope that this paper might serve as a general introduction to the work of Simondon for psychologists not yet familiar with his ideas and that it will help foster interest in further exploring Simondon for the discipline.

Situating Simondon: The problem of experience in context

The ideas we present in this article converge with recent developments in the way theoretical psychologists think about how we are experientially relating to the world around us. Scholars from different theoretical traditions and fields of research have come to challenge the cognitivist tenet that experience is basically information processing, a faculty situated within a mind that itself is separated from the world and can thus only come in contact with what lies beyond itself by means of mental representations (Thrift, 2008). Alternative approaches to experience that are eschewing the Cartesian dualism of cognitive psychology have come from different theoretical backgrounds, putting different aspects of psychosocial life at the centre of attention (see McGann et al., 2013; Pouw & de Jong, 2015). Despite their differences, these approaches converge in the idea that The world is inseparable from the subject, but from a subject which is nothing but a project of the world, and the subject is inseparable from the world, but from a world which the subject itself projects. (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/2002, pp. 499–500) What Merleau-Ponty drives at here is the idea that experience emerges out of a relational nexus between a subject and the world[1], where neither element of the relation precedes the relation itself. Thus, experience (or what is often called the

realm of mentality, cognition, etc.) cannot be conceptualised as an a priori faculty situated within an already constituted individual, but has to be understood as an emergent property that already presupposes the relational interface between subject and world. However, the theoretical challenge has been to understand how relational experience actually unfolds and what concepts might help us come to terms with this.

From one side, enactivist theories of experience (Froese & Di Paolo, 2011; Thompson, 2007; Torrance, 2005, 2007; Ward et al., 2017) have been emphasising the role of the practical engagement of an actor with the world as fundamental to experience. How we relate to the world (as well as to ourselves as part of it)—both passive-perceptively (Noë, 2004) and actively (Weichold, 2018)—is thus founded in a primordial engagement *with* the world (McGann et al., 2013, p. 203). The enactivist perspective thus emphasises the dynamic, auto-poietic self-organisation of an organism relative to its environment (Di Paolo, 2005). By way of emerging first and foremost from the practical engagement with the world, experience as enactivists view it is not a detached and primarily reflexive theoretical enterprise of extracting and synthesising information, but is fundamentally embodied, localised in the whole body as it interacts with what goes on around (Hanna & Maiese, 2009; Hutto & Myin, 2013; Varela et al., 2016). Further expanding the enactivist and embodied take on experience, scholars have also begun to focus the embedded (or situated) nature of experience (Pouw & De Jong, 2015). In this context, it has been highlighted that the auto-poietic process of embodied self-organisation is itself not detachable from the features of the situational environment with which the organism is engaged (Thompson & Varela, 2001). Drawing from Gibson's (1986) ecological psychology, the embedded approach focuses on affordances—environmental structures that incite certain ways of perceiving, feeling, and responding—and their role in the dynamic self-actualisation of the organism (Da Rold, 2018). It was not least in this context that the role of the specifically social situatedness of experience has become a central concern for the enactivist project (Di Paolo, 2009; Maiese, 2019; Weichold, 2016).

Another important contribution came from scholars who—based on the enactivist and embodiment arguments—started questioning the usefulness of the distinction between experience and context (environment, situation, "world," etc.) altogether. Extended cognition approaches focus on instances where properties tra-

ditionally assigned to the subjective side of experience, with mentality or—broadly—with the psychic, are externalised (Clark & Chalmers, 1998; Froese & Fuchs, 2012; Menary, 2010). Proponents of this approach have been arguing that—at least under certain circumstances—it is warranted to extend the concept of experience beyond the confines of the individual brain (or body in the sense of the embodiment perspective). Some have referred to examples such as technological enhancements of experiential (and motoric) capabilities, like using a notebook in order to compensate for impairment of basic memory functions. Over the years, the enactivist, embodiment, situated, and (sometimes) extended approaches to experience in context have converged into a theoretical framework (Etzelmuller et al., 2017; Thompson, 2007). Nevertheless, there are considerable conceptual tensions and ambiguities within this thought collective that are the topic of ongoing and controversial debates (Maiese, 2018).

Turning to Simondon: Emergent experience and processes of becoming

In this article, we are not dealing with these controversies directly but rather address the underlying problem of experience in context from a different angle. To that aim, we build on the work of Gilbert Simondon. Simondon was a French psychologist and philosopher who studied under George Canguilhem and Maurice Merleau-Ponty and gained his doctoral degree in 1958. While the supplementary thesis, "Du mode d'existence des objets techniques" ("On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects"; Simondon, 1958), was immediately published and was widely recognised as an important contribution to the philosophy of technology, the first part of Simondon's (1964/1995) main thesis, "L'individuation a la lumiere des notions de forme et de l'information" ("Individuation in Light of the Notions of Form and Information"), only got published in 1964 (Simondon, 1964/in press) and did not receive quite the recognition as his writings on technology. Though Simondon was elected to the chair of psychology at the Sorbonne in 1963, his theoretical influence was most profoundly felt beyond the disciplinary boundaries of academic psychology. A continuing volume of his work on individuation was not published until 1989, the year in which Simondon died. Only recently has Simondon's work been rediscovered—often through the work of Deleuze, Massumi, Stiegler, and others (De Boever, Murray, & Roffe, 2012; De Boever, Murray,

Roffe, & Woodward, 2012a, 2012b). The year 2020 is finally seeing the first English translation of Simondon's "L'individuation a la lumiere des notions de forme et de l'information" (Simondon, 1964/in press). In his work on psychic and collective individuation, Simondon (2007) was interested in the emergent relation between an organism and its environment. There he touched on many of the themes and concerns that drive the research agenda outlined in the previous section, albeit from a unique perspective. For Simondon, the central problem was to understand the process by which a particular individual emerges relative to their associated milieu—its ontogenesis (Simondon, 2009). Regarding his own theoretical background, Simondon can be included in a lineage that also features names like Bergson, Whitehead, and his contemporary Deleuze (Bowden, 2012; Halewood, 2005; Roffe & Jones, 2009; Stenner, 2008). With regard to the topic of this paper, this lineage can be characterised as follows: perhaps the most important point is that these thinkers part with the idea of a "presence of (static) entities as foundational cornerstones" (Nichterlein, 2018b, pp. 8–9) of scientific discovery, instead focusing on the process through which such entities come into being in the first place. With reference to experience, this *process theoretical point of vantage* is expressed by Whitehead (1927–1928/1985) in "the statement that experience involves a becoming, that becoming means that something becomes, and that what becomes involves repetition transformed into novel immediacy" (pp. 136–137). In other words, process theory is built on the assumption that becoming precedes individual being, but that becoming itself can only be adequately understood as the becoming of something (the individual being). Therefore, becoming—the operation of the creative forces of life in potentiality— is not beyond (or in opposition to) structure, identity, and being, but has to be theorised as the immanent principle of everything that comes to be. What these authors aim to explain then is not primarily being as static and unchangeable matter of fact but the emergence of difference and the transformative potential of becoming other. This *focus on creativity and the emergence of the novel* is not to be misinterpreted as obliviousness to the normative and structurally repressive dimension of—for instance—social experience (Deleuze, 1992). Rather, it is about a radical shift in the way subjectivity and experience are approached as "a temporal effect of immanent processes of emergence and organization," state Duff and Price-Robertson (2018, p. 98). We are dealing with "a processual

subject, an emergent effect of an immanent 'field' of pre-personal . . . affects, relations, forces, signs and events" (p. 98). What Duff and Price-Robertson express here is a shift from an essentialist ontology (privileging the position of the experiencing subject a priori to any situated instance of experience) toward a *relational ontology* (Del Lucchese, 2009). By prioritising processes of becoming over the matter-of-factness of things, these thinkers part with the substantialising idea of an autonomous agent of experience (the subject) in favour of placing the experiencing subject within a context of experience. The aim then is to explain the coconstitution (Slunecko, 2008) of subjective experience *and* its environment. And finally, by foregoing the idea that experience is the property of an already constituted cognitive apparatus, mentality, or simply the brain, these thinkers have rejected the idea that experience is best understood as reflexive and rational information processing. Instead, they found the relational becoming of experience in a relation of concern (Stenner, 2008, p. 92), that is, a prereflexive, affective mode of encountering the world (Massumi, 1995). Within a process theoretical account of relational coconstitution of experience, "the activity of feeling is not the 'actual' as fixed, finite, receding form, but the process of actualisation whereby potentials are concretely realized" (Stenner, 2017, p. 213).

To sum up, Simondon's work can be situated within a philosophical lineage that prioritises processual becoming over static being, relational coconstitution over essentialist conceptualisations of subject/object, and affective potentiality (and creative differentiation) over structure (lawful sameness). In this article, we will not be able to deal specifically with Simondon's position regarding these matters (but for general introductions to Simondon's work in context, see Combes, 2013; De Boever et al., 2012; Scott, 2014).

There are close similarities and conceptual overlaps between the theoretical lineage that Simondon comes from and an enactivist perspective on situated experience outlined in the first section of this article. These similarities have been brought to the forefront most prominently in the context of what has been labelled the affective turn in the social sciences (Clough & Halley, 2007; Gregg & Seigworth, 2010; Leys, 2011; Sedgwick & Frank, 1995; Wetherell, 2015). A key figure here is Massumi (1995; see also De Boever et al., 2012), who has introduced a concept of affect derived from the tradition of Spinoza and Deleuze to

social scientific research (Deleuze, 1988; Slaby & Muhlhoff, 2019; Spinoza, 2002; Stenner, 2017; Yovel, 1999).

What makes Simondon particularly compelling at the intersection between these converging theoretical lineages, and especially from a psychological perspective, is the fact that his theory of psychic and collective individuation accounts specifically for the processual emergence of human individuality. While there has been a tendency recently to de-emphasise the psychological focus on the individual in favour of more large-scale practices of subject formation (see, for an overview of the field, Slaby & von Scheve, 2019), Simondon does not only forgo the distinction between the genesis of macrolevel social practices and the process of concretisation of individual experience—rather, he aims at integrating both as moments of a general theory of ontogenesis. Therefore, we think that Simondon can help us to articulate a distinctly psychological perspective on experience in context, while *also* acknowledging in full the implications from the converging enactivist and process theoretical traditions outlined thus far.

Becoming individual: Simondon on processes of individuation

In order to understand Gilbert Simondon's concern, we need to consider the general scope and ambition of his work first. We have already pointed out key features of Simondon's philosophical lineage. Within this broader philosophical context, Simondon was concerned with the genesis of "individuality" or individual being (Simondon, 2007). To him, individuality is the always preliminary and never fully achievable result of a process of individuation. Following a process theoretical, relational approach, Simondon criticises traditional theoretical positions for trying to explain the *process* of individuation based on its *outcome*, that is, the already constituted individual (Simondon, 2009, pp. 4–5). Rather than trying to back trace the process of genesis by which *this individual* came into being, thus risking substantialising the individual in its presumed full concreteness, Simondon wants to understand individuation as an open process of (trans-) formation. He thereby breaks with the presupposition that what is there in front of us is the inevitable outcome of a teleological development (Simondon, 2009). Importantly, this goes along with the understanding that the creative forces driving individuation are not limited to what ultimately ends up manifesting. There is always an excess of creative potentiality that transcends the manifestation of a concrete

individual being and adds to its specific timbre. Studying ontogenesis in its full scope always has to consider this excess and cannot stop at the prima facie facticity of being as individuated.

The shift in perspective from the outcome of individuation to its source and processual unfolding leaves Simondon with the question of what this ominous point of origin of individuation might be. If one does not assume from the outset that individuation "creates" or "evolves into" *this* individual being by some inevitable progression, then becoming individual must originate from a state of being prior to individual being. At the same time,

> In order to grasp firmly the nature of individuation, we must consider the being not as a substance, or matter, or form, but as a tautly extended and supersaturated system, which exists at a higher level than the unit itself, which is not sufficient unto itself and cannot be adequately conceptualized according to the principle of the excluded middle. (Simondon, 1992, p. 301)

By rejecting the notions of "substance," "matter," and "form," Simondon emphasises that individuation does not originate from an ontological unity that precedes the becoming individual. Contrarily, the notion of a "supersaturated system" captures that being prior to individuation is an overdetermined state, capable of a multiplicity of becomings. However, these potential trajectories do not cancel each other out—as would be required by the principle of the excluded middle—but constitute a being sui generis. Simondon's term for this mode of being is *the preindividual*. The central idea here is that the preindividual emerges from the juxtaposition of different "orders of magnitude" (Barthelemy, 2012, pp. 219–220), one exceeding the level of individual being, one remaining beyond it.[2] It holds the potential for a multiplicity of becomings, yet in such a way that it is indeterminable a priori which one of them might come to actualise. In order to avoid the misunderstanding that the preindividual is merely an abstract background construction based on an already manifest individual being, Simondon also uses the expression preindividual reality, thus emphasising that preindividuality is in fact a real (lived, felt, experienced) state of the living, albeit one that could be more aptly described as a *problematic of the living*. In this regard, Simondon shares a line of thinking with Bergson and Deleuze (Nichterlein, 2018a; Nichterlein & Morss,

2016), insofar as the preindividual can be understood as Simondon's version of a vitalistic concept of life as creative force, or as potentiality on the verge of actualisation (Nichterlein, 2019). However—and this is the crucial twist in Simondon— the inherently tensed and conflicted dynamic of a preindividual situation means that the living is urged beyond this deeply ambiguous state and towards concretisation through individuation. Simondon rejects versions of vitalism that hypostasise the creative forces of life as opposite to everything that is structure, fixation, order, and so forth, as if the solution to the inherent problem of the living were to free the creative powers of life from that which holds and represses them (Massumi, 1995; Stenner, 2017). In contrast, Simondon points out that the reality of the preindividual is at the same time a lived state characterised by heightened sensitivity, affectivity, and dynamic potentiality, but also a state of unbearable tension, conflict, and ambiguity. Later in this article, we elaborate in more detail that this pressure-cooker situation of preindividual reality is exactly where Simondon situates the affective dynamics of anxiety—an anxiety that urges the living being to "turn" toward the collective. Simondon borrows from thermodynamics when defining preindividual reality as metastable (Barthelemy, 2012, p. 217; Combes, 2013, pp. 3–4; Simondon, 2007, pp. 14–16). An energetic system is in a state of metastablility when it is in a heightened state of tension, its inherent forces pulling the system in multiple directions at the same time. It is a system on the verge of actualisation, as its inherent dynamic conflict has reached a tipping point. Consequently, individuation can be conceptualised as the process by which the tension inherent in a metastable system is (temporarily) resolved:

> Individuation must therefore be thought of as a partial and relative resolution manifested in a system that contains latent potentials and harbors a certain incompatibility with itself, an incompatibility due at once to forces in tension as well as to the impossibility of interaction between terms of extremely disparate dimensions. (Simondon, 1992, p. 300)

For Simondon, the resolution to the inherent incompatibility that characterises the preindividual in human beings can only be achieved through what he calls psychic individuation. Picking up on the distinction between life as vital force (potentiality or the virtual, to borrow a term from Massumi, 2005) and lived experience as the emergence of structured patterns in the relation of an organism to self and

world, Simondon argues that the two aspects of the living should not be seen as strict opposites, but as two moments of the process of becoming individual. Thus, individuation does not—strictly speaking—resolve the preindividual tension, but rather transforms its energetic potential in a novel relational configuration of the living being.

There is a double meaning of the term *relation* at play here. The first is expressed in Simondon's statement that the vital forces of becoming can never be ultimately fixated through individuation. Something of the preindividual is carried on throughout each cycle of individuation (Simondon, 2007, p. 18):

> The process of individuation does not exhaust everything that came before (the preindividual), and that a metastable regime is not only maintained by the individual, but is actually borne by it, to such an extent that the finally constituted individual carries with it a certain inheritance associated with its preindividual reality, one animated by all the potentials that characterize it. (Simondon, 1992, p. 306)

Therefore, in one sense, individuation unfolds into a novel relation between two modes of being (preindividual and individual), in this sense rearticulating and transpositioning the initial tension into a new configuration. At the same time— this is the second meaning of relational—what comes of individuation is a novel relation between the living organism and its environment, its milieu, as Simondon (1992, p. 300) puts it. To unfold this argument, let us return to the concept of different orders of magnitude involved in the characterisation of preindividual reality. The process of individuation is thus situated at the intersection between a broader problematic of the living (referring to the broader context in which the organism finds itself) and a particular problem of living (think for instance of a task, an obstacle to overcome, etc.). Whatever the circumstances, the problematic of living always relates to something that transcends the organism as well as to something that does not exhaust its capacities. In a sense, one can say that life *is* the site of a polarity (or relation) between these distant orders of magnitude. The problematic of living then comes down to incorporating the polarity such that the living being bears its inherent tension rather than being torn apart by it. With reference to the notion of a relation between orders of magnitude, psychic individua-

tion then is the process through which the polarity is incorporated as elements of an internal organisation of the organism (Simondon, 2007, p. 17).

Moments of experience: Perception, affect, action

Up to this point, we have for the most part been using the terms living being and organism when referring to human beings in the process of becoming individual. This has been justified thus far, as Simondon develops the notions of preindividual reality and individuation as principal moments of the ontogenesis of living beings in general. In this regard, the difference between human beings and organisms like, say, plants or vegetables, is not one of substance. Rather, it is defined in terms of quantitative differences (with regard to the problematic of incompatible orders of magnitude) and modes of resolution. Thus, ontogenesis in the (specifically human) mode of psychic and collective individuation is preceded by (and continuously complemented by) biophysical individuations (Simondon, 1964). The specific problematic of becoming *human* has to be explained through an analysis of *how* individuation works in this case. This is the point at which we encounter the central problem of this article: the problem of experience in context. In order to get to this crucial aspect of Simondon's theory of individuation, let us return to preindividual reality once again. As we pointed out at the end of the last section, one way to understand the problematic situation of the preindividual is by referring to a polarity between distant orders of magnitude that need to become incorporated as elements of the organisation of an organism. Without going too deep into the philosophical intricacies of the matter (Combes, 2013, pp. 1–24; De Boever et al., 2012b; Scott, 2014), the crucial point is that psychic individuation is basically the (temporary) resolution of preindividual tensions (conflicting impulses, distant orders of magnitude) through establishing an experiential polarity of an (sensitive, emotive, and mobile) individual oriented toward its associated milieu. In this sense, Simondon can say that "in the living being, individuation is brought about by the individual itself, and is not simply a functioning object that results from an individuation previously accomplished" (1992, p. 305). However, this is not to be misinterpreted as a backdoor to a renewed substantialism of an agency that is driving individuation. Instead of speaking of interiority it might be better to use the expression interiorising, which refers to a perpetuated liminal process in

which there is ultimately always more at play than what the becoming individual is able to incorporate:

> The psyche represents the continuing effort of individuation in a being that has to resolve its own problematic through its own involvement as an element of the problem by taking action as a subject. The subject can be thought of as the unity of the being when it is thought of as a living individual, and as a being that represents its activity to itself in the world both as an element and a dimension of the world. Problems that concern living beings are not just confined to their own sphere: only by means of an unending series of successive individuations, which ensure that ever-more preindividual reality is brought into play and incorporated into the relation with the milieu, can we endow living beings with an open-ended axiomatic. (Simondon, 1992, pp. 306–307)

This concept of a processual interiorising situated at the threshold of a "plurality of orders of magnitude" (Simondon, 1992, p. 307), thus unfolding from an (impossible) position of eccentricity, brings with it important implications for a psychological theory of human experience. First, as we have already stated, experience cannot be conceptualised with reference to an already individuated psychic apparatus and its various capacities. Experience *is* precisely the process *of interiorising* through which the polarised relation between a realm of the psychic and a milieu toward which psyche is oriented is brought into being in the first place.[3] In this sense, experience is the act of becoming (psychic) individual. The analysis of its modes and properties has to proceed with reference to this processual activity (and not—as we have discussed in the introduction to Simondon—to the outcome of the activity). At the same time, in order to understand the full scope of human experience, one cannot contain this activity within an individual entity separate from its environment as the dynamics of the experiential relation are— by definition—preindividual, thus always "more than one" (Combes, 2013, p. 3), larger in scope than the individual itself. Here we find a point of correspondence with the fundamental tenet of enactivist conceptions of experience (Torrance, 2005, 2007). What Simondon allows us to see is that the whole situational arrangement is at the same time the emergent result of a process and that this process itself perpetuates the problematic of the liminal intersection between exteriority and interiority. Consequently, it is not enough to state that experience is the process by which an individual actualises through its embodied and situated in-

teraction with the environment. Rather, we have to understand how the broader problematic of the preindividual is reinscribed in a realm of interiority (Simondon, 2007, p. 17). Thus, we have to understand the modes of the experiential relation with reference to the concepts of the preindividual and individuation. In *L'individuation psychique et collective* (Simondon, 2007), Simondon addresses this task with regard to perception, affectivity, and action. In particular, he uses the analysis of perception as a "starting point and anchor for his approach to the problem of individuation" (Scott, 2014, p. 45). It is with regard to the problem of perception that the shift in perspective that the theory of individuation wants to achieve becomes most tangible. The important point here is that perception is not an act by which an already-constituted subject takes notice of the world out there. Rather, "perception individuates by establishing a differential bipolar and intensive field" (Scott, 2014, p. 45). For Simondon, "the genesis of the subject and object operate on the same plane of individuation" (Scott, 2014, p. 51). Again, starting the operation from preindividual reality, which already places the subject within a wider problematic of life, perception is no longer about bringing together two distinct entities, but about a coemergent relation. Within this relation, perception is about a reciprocal enacted orientation connecting the experiencing subject and its associated milieu. In this article, we cannot give an account of Simondon's prolonged and intense dealing with the problematic of perception, from its prominent status in *L'individuation psychique et collective* (Simondon, 2007) to his courses on perception (Simondon, 1964–65/2006), but refer readers to Scott's (2014, pp. 45–93) discussion of the matter. Briefly, we want to point toward the similarity between the way Simondon introduces the problematic of perception and the prominent status of this topic in Paul Stenner's Whitehead-inspired approach (Stenner, 2017). As we argue in the conclusion to this paper, further exploring the convergences between these theoretical projects will be an interesting endeavour for future research.

Regarding the topic of this article—developing a theoretical psychological perspective on the problem of experience in context—we have now reached a point where we have come to articulate the problematic of experience as one of psychic individuation. With Simondon we argue that experience is to be conceptualised as the processual resolution of a certain preindividual problematic. By shifting the focus from the constitution of a realm of the psychic to the problematic,

which precedes the process of constitution, we see that individuation already presupposes a relational situation that is much wider in scope than what is usually considered to fall under the psychological domain. This relational situation simultaneously involves the becoming of an (experiencing) individual with its particular mode of encountering the world and at the same time the becoming of a certain milieu corresponding to the experiencing individual. This idea of a dual process of ontogenesis already holds the key to Simondon's theory of collectivity and collective individuation. In order to address this aspect in the following section of this paper, however, we need to take one more step and deal with the role of affectivity in the process of individuation.

Turning toward the collective: The psycho-social pathway

So far, we have seen that psychic reality is to be characterised first and foremost by a state of tension, which already implies intense affective charges at play. And indeed, for Simondon, affect is key when it comes to understanding how preindividual potentiality manifests as experience. We have seen that something of the preindividual problematic persists throughout each cycle of individuation, so that the individual can never become fully individuated. Rather, the individual always bears something of this initial tension at each level of concretisation. This is why, for Simondon, the precarious "state" of being individual is always but a *phase* in the process of individuation, charged with a surplus of potential energy which ultimately drives beyond what is.

But what does this mean for experience? At the beginning of the second section of this article, we pointed out that the persistence of preindividual potentials throughout the processes of individuation "can take the form of an unbearable invasion within the subject experiencing it" (Combes, 2013, p. 32). Again, this emphasises the affective dynamics at play in this situation. By speaking of an "invasion," Combes gives us another important clue: for Simondon, the affective *experience* of the preindividual is crucially incited by the realisation that the individual can never be a self-sufficient entity. It is always "more-than-individual life" (Combes, 2013, p. 31). Simondon develops this notion of a constitutive "more-than" in two (interrelated) directions. The first is the relation individual/preindividual, that is, the relation between actualisation and all that is not (yet) actualised in a certain phase of becoming. The second aspect, or the "more-

than," brings us back to a point we briefly touched upon earlier: for Simondon, individuation is never a solipsistic process, but is situated at the intersection between what in more traditional terminology would be called "self" and "world." Thus, individuation brings forth not only an individual entity (however supersaturated with potential), but a relation between individual and associated milieu. In this sense, individuation is always the becoming of an individual and at the same time the becoming of an environment relative to this individual. The experiential problematic of human beings (the unbearable invasion of which Combes speaks) has to be understood with both aspects of this "more than" in mind. However, at a crucial point in *L'individuation psychique et collective* (Simondon, 2007, pp. 111–114), Simondon discusses the case of an individual trying to become truly individual by enclosing itself against all that goes beyond itself.

There, Simondon criticises the way Heidegger interpreted anxiety as a fundamental mode of disclosing our being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1927/1993, pp. 339–346). In Simondon's reading, anxiety arises not from the realisation of a being's openness toward its ultimate possibility (being toward death). Quite contrarily, anxiety refers to the experience of a being attempting to become individual solely on its own terms. Therefore, what the affect of anxiety reveals is the constitutive futility of any attempt at dealing with the problematic of individuation intra-individually—the scope and scene of individuation already is beyond what an individual can grasp (Simondon, 2007, pp. 111–112). For Simondon, the individualistic attempt must lead to a paralysed and depressed state, experientially closed off from others as well as from one's own immanent potentials. This point certainly is highly relevant for psychological and phenomenological research regarding certain psychopathologies like melancholic depression (see, for instance, Fuchs, 2010).

In showing—through his analysis of anxiety—how the solipsistic resolution of the problematic of human life is bound to fail, Simondon is able to present a different theoretical trajectory for coming to terms with the relational problematic of individuation. In light of its incompatibility with itself, the living being is "tensed toward the collective" (Combes, 2013, p. 32). It is thus urged to inscribe its own problematic in a wider, transindividual process. Simondon argues that psychic individuation—becoming through lived experience—must be complemented by a collective individuation. It is important to stress that, for Simondon, psychic and collec-

tive individuation are not ontologically separate dynamics but rather one process viewed from two angles. However, there is a certain autonomy to psychic and collective processes of individuation. Both are intertwined and incite and provoke one another, still they operate on different levels of magnitude and upon different preindividual problematics. We think that this idea of multiple yet intertwined processes of individuation is important in order to get a clear understanding of the interplay between processes and practices on a collective level and the coconstitutive relation of an individual to the collective.

Depending on whether one addresses the situation through the lens of collective practices or individual experience, the articulation of preindividual problematics as well as the processual resolution of these problematics will differ. Together and through their continuous interplay, they bring forth what Simondon calls *transindividual*:

> The two individuations, psychic and collective, have a reciprocal effect on each other; they allow us to define a transindividual category that might account for the systematic unity of internal individuation (psychic) and external individuation (collective). The psychosocial world of the transindividual . . . requires that one postulate the previous influence of a veritable process of individuation rooted in a preindividual reality, associated with individuals and capable of constituting a new problematic with its own metastability. (1992, p. 307)

From a psychological perspective, the primary goal is to understand how a preindividual being turns collective in the attempt to come to terms with the "unbearable invasion" of what precedes it. It accomplishes this by unfolding a relational orientation toward its associated milieu, thus becoming collective individual.

Conclusion: Open questions and directions for further research

We have been proposing Simondon's process theoretical framework for studying human experience through psychic and collective individuation. We have argued that experience should be understood as the processual resolution of a tension, which involves the polarity between different orders of magnitude in the living. This situates experience in the context of a vitalistic theoretical project in the tradition of Bergson, Whitehead, Deleuze, and others. At the same time, there are conceptual points of convergence with certain concepts and ideas coming from

an enactivist, embodied, and situated take on cognition, action, and affectivity. To conclude this article, we present a few ideas for how to expand further on this theoretical project. As each of these trajectories would require a separate paper, we limit ourselves to listing them as hints and hope to be able to follow up on them in the future.

Recently, Paul Stenner (2017) has presented his own take on a process theoretical theory of experience based on the work of Alfred North Whitehead (1927–1928/1985). Stenner discusses the way in which Whitehead addresses the problem of perception and sense-making. There is more than one theoretical link between Whitehead and Simondon and it will be interesting to see how the two approaches intersect but also challenge each other.

In a similar vein, Stenner (2017) is putting affectivity at the centre of his investigation of experience, especially in the context of his work on liminality (Stenner et al., 2017). His argumentation closely resembles the way Simondon links affectivity to the persistence of a certain metastability within each phase of an organism's internal organisation. In this sense, affect as the experience of unresolved preindividual energy could be another way of approaching the experiential dimension of what Stenner and others (Stenner, 2017, Szakolczai, 2009, 2017; Thomassen, 2014) have been calling permanent liminality.

One last point regarding the work of Paul Stenner. An aspect, which we have been foregoing in this article, is the role of language and signification in processes of individuation. To incorporate such a perspective, it could be particularly worth exploring the relation between Simondon's concept of signification and Stenner's usage of the Bergsonian notion of fabulation as a starting point for a process theoretical conception of the psychology of signification (Stenner, 2017). In light of the ongoing project of investigating social practices and structures through affectivity (Slaby & von Scheve, 2019), Simondon's theory of a dual process of individuation that revolves around the polarity between psychic and collective individuation converging in a transindividual relation might be further developed in the direction of a distinctly psychological theory of psychosocial affect. This might open up psychological theorising (and empirical research) to inter- and transdisciplinary exchange with the current developments in the social scientific study of affect in context. In this direction, we find Tucker's (2018) recent paper an interesting point of reference.

Moreover, we attempt to expand Simondon's theory of affectivity in order to better understand the role that different notions of affective experience, as they are currently in use in psychological discourse, might assume within a theory of individuating experience. As we argue in another article (Wrbouschek & Slunecko, 2020), Simondon is helpful for expanding recent theoretical approaches to situated affectivity in the enactivist tradition (Colombetti, 2014, 2017a, 2017b; Colombetti & Thompson, 2008). However, and this seems to be very important for psychologists interested in working with Simondon, such a project will need to clarify how different affective experiences relate to Simondon's preindividual and transindividual realities. To give just one example: (cognitive) psychologists and phenomenologists sometimes distinguish between different affective experiences with regard to the way they are bodily felt as well as with regard to their specific intentionality (see, for instance, Frijda 1993; Fuchs, 2013; Lambie & Marcel, 2002). Simondon's claim that the persistence of preindividual reality throughout the process(es) of individuation is manifested experientially through affect then raises the question: Does this apply to all varieties of affective experience? And if so: How can differences between appraisal-like emotional responses (Scherer et al., 2001), moods (Breidenbach & Docherty, 2019), and presumably even more fundamental existential feelings (Ratcliffe, 2005) be conceptualised?

There is still much to be discovered in Simondon, just as his theoretical work is being rediscovered (Simondon, 1964/in press) and becoming more widely recognised. Especially for psychological research, we consider Simondon an important and valuable source of inspiration and we hope that this article will help further the process of adoption of his process theory within the discipline.

Notes

1. Here "world" does not refer to a static objective reality spread out for inspection by an otherwise enclosed mind. Rather, world here refers to what phenomenologists would call an intentional relatum of experience. In this sense, the shift in perspective we are advocating for is already inherent to the concept of world that we employ. Throughout this article, unless specified otherwise, we will refer to world in this sense.

2. The notion "orders of magnitude" is among the most complex in the work of Simondon. One way to explain this is with reference to problems of

agency. The singular act by an individual can thus be construed as relating on the one hand to a specific set of affordances (the task at hand), which clearly does not exhaust the full potential agency of the individual. At the same time, the act relates to a context of practices and broader affordance systems (the tasks potentially per-formed in a situation like this—for instance in the context of contemporary capitalist division of labour) that exceeds the capacity of this one individual. Within this dual relational structure, the singular act is always a specific resolution of the tension between these two orders of magnitude and it is clear that the single act can never exhaust all the potential ways of resolving this tension.

3. Yet another way to express this would be to say that experience is the operation of folding exteriority onto itself thereby creating a space of internal resonance. By using the metaphor of the fold, the specific correspondence between Simondon and Deleuze (Deleuze, 1993, 1999, pp. 78–101) would be brought out even more clearly, however, a closer examination would go well be-yond the scope of this paper (but see Bowden, 2012; Toscano, 2009; Tucker, 2018).

References

Barthelemy, J.-H. (2012). Fifty key terms in the works of Gilbert Simondon. In A. De Boever, A. Murray, J. Roffe, & A. Woodward (Eds.), *Gilbert Simondon: Being and technology* (pp. 203–231). Edinburgh University Press.

Bowden, S. (2012). Gilles Deleuze, a reader of Gilbert Simondon. In A. De Boever, A. Murray, J. Roffe, & A. Woodward (Eds.), *Gilbert Simondon: Being and technology* (pp.135–153). Edinburgh University Press.

Breidenbach, B., & Docherty, T. (Eds.). (2019). *Mood: Interdisciplinary perspectives, new theories*. Routledge.

Clark, A., & Chalmers, D. (1998). The extended mind. *Analysis, 58*(1), 7–19. https://doi.org/10.5209/rev_CIYC.2011.v16.1

Clough, P. T., & Halley, J. (Eds.). (2007). *The affective turn: Theorizing the social*. Duke University Press.

Colombetti, G. (2014). *The feeling body: Affective science meets the enactive mind*. MIT Press.

Colombetti, G. (2017a). The embodied and situated nature of moods. *Philosophia*, *45*(4), 1437–1451. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11406-017-9817-0

Colombetti, G. (2017b). Enactive affectivity, extended. *Topoi*, *36*(3), 445–455. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11245-015-9335-2

Colombetti, G., & Thompson, E. (2008). The feeling body: Towards an enactive approach to emotion. In W. F. Overton, U. Muller, & J. Newman (Eds.), *Developmental perspectives on embodiment and consciousness* (pp. 45–68). Erlbaum.

Combes, M. (2013). *Gilbert Simondon and the philosophy of the transindividual*. MIT Press.

Da Rold, F. (2018). Defining embodied cognition: The problem of situatedness. *New Ideas in Psychology*, *51*, 9–14. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.newideapsych.2018.04.001

De Boever, A., Murray, A., & Roffe, J. (2012). "Technical mentality" revisited: Brian Massumi on Gilbert Simondon. In A. De Boever, A. Murray, J. Roffe, & A. Woodward (Eds.), *Gilbert Simondon: Being and technology* (pp. 19–36). Edinburgh University Press.

De Boever, A., Murray, A., Roffe, J., & Woodward, A. (2012a). Editor's introduction: Simondon, finally. In A. De Boever, A. Murray, J. Roffe, & A. Woodward (Eds.), *Gilbert Simondon: Being and technology* (pp. vii–xi). Edinburgh University Press.

De Boever, A., Murray, A., Roffe, J., & Woodward, A. (Eds.). (2012b). *Gilbert Simondon: Being and technology*. Edinburgh University Press.

Deleuze, G. (1988). *Spinoza: Practical philosophy*. City Lights Books.

Deleuze, G. (1992, Winter). Postscript on the societies of control. October, *59*, 3–7.

Deleuze, G. (1993). *The fold: Leibniz and the baroque*. University of Minnesota Press.

Deleuze, G. (1999). *Foucault*. Continuum.

Del Lucchese, F. (2009). Monstrous individuations: Deleuze, Simondon, and relational ontology. *Differences*, *20*(2–3), 179–193. https://doi.org/10.1215/10407391-2009-008

Di Paolo, E. (2005). Autopoiesis, adaptivity, teleology, agency. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, *4*(4), 429–452. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-005-9002-y

Di Paolo, E. (2009). The social and enactive mind. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, *8*(4), 409–415. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-009-9143-5

Duff, C., & Price-Robertson, R. (2018). Deterritorialising the psychological subject (for a people to come). *Annual Review of Critical Psychology*, *14*, 93–109.

Etzelmuller, G., Fuchs, T., & Tewes, C. (Eds.). (2017). *Verkörperung – eine neue interdisziplinäre Anthropologie* [Embodiment – A new interdisciplinary anthropology]. De Gruyter.

Frijda, N. H. (1993). Moods, emotion episodes, and emotions. In M. Lewis & J. M. Haviland (Eds.), *Handbook of emotions* (pp. 381–403). The Guilford Press.

Froese, T., & Di Paolo, E. (2011). The enactive approach: Theoretical sketches from cell to society. *Pragmatics and Cognition*, *19*(1), 1–36. https://doi.org/10.1075/pc.19.1.01fro

Froese, T., & Fuchs, T. (2012). The extended body: A case study in the neuro-phenomenology of social interaction. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, *11*(2), 205–235. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-012-9254-2

Fuchs, T. (2010). Phenomenology and psychopathology. In S. Gallagher & D. Schmicking (Eds.), *Handbook of phenomenology and cognitive science* (pp. 547–573). Springer.

Fuchs, T. (2013). The phenomenology of affectivity. In K. W. M. Fulford, M. Davies, R. G. T.

Gipps, G. Graham, J. Z. Sadler, G. Stanghellini, & T. Thornton (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of philosophy and psychiatry* (pp. 612–631). Oxford University Press.

Gibson, J. J. (1986). *The ecological approach to visual perception*. Psychology Press.

Gregg, M., & Seigworth, G. (Eds.). (2010). *The affect theory reader*. Duke University Press.

Halewood, M. (2005). On Whitehead and Deleuze: The process of materiality. *Configurations*, *13*(1), 57–76. https://doi.org/10.1353/con.2007.0009

Hanna, R., & Maiese, M. (2009). *Embodied minds in action*. Oxford University Press.

Heidegger, M. (1993). *Sein und Zeit* [Being and time]. Niemeyer. (Original work published 1927)

Hutto, D. D., & Myin, E. (2013). *Radicalizing enactivism: Basic minds without content*. MIT Press.

Lambie, J. A., & Marcel, A. J. (2002). Consciousness and the varieties of emotion experience: A theoretical framework. *Psychological Review, 109*(2), 219–259. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.109.2.219

Leys, R. (2011). The turn to affect: A critique. *Critical Inquiry, 37*(3), 434–472. https://doi.org/10.1086/659353

Maiese, M. (2018). Can the mind be embodied, enactive, affective, *and* extended? *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences, 17*(2), 343–361. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-017-9510-6

Maiese, M. (2019). Embodiment, sociality, and the life shaping thesis. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences, 18*(2), 353–374. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-018-9565-z

Massumi, B. (1995). The autonomy of affect. *Cultural Critique, 31*, 83–109. https://doi.org/10.2307/1354446

Massumi, B. (2005). *Parables for the virtual: Movement, affect, sensation*. Duke University Press.

McGann, M., De Jaegher, H., & Di Paolo, E. (2013). Enaction and psychology. *Review of General Psychology, 17*(2), 203–209. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032935

Menary, R. (2010). *The extended mind*. MIT Press.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (2002). *Phenomenology of perception*. Routledge. (Original work published 1962)

Nichterlein, M. (2019, August 19–23). *Unmeasuring ourselves: Difference and becoming-imperceptible as critical tools for a psychology to come* [Paper presentation]. ISTP conference, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Nichterlein, M. (Ed.). (2018a). Putting the Deleuzian machine to work in psychology [Special issue]. *Annual Review of Critical Psychology, 14*.

Nichterlein, M. (2018b). Putting the Deleuzian machine to work in psychology: Critical and clinical becomings. *Annual Review of Critical Psychology, 14*, 7–17.

Nichterlein, M., & Morss, J. R. (2016). *Deleuze and psychology: Philosophical provocations and psychological practices*. Routledge.

Noe, A. (2004). *Action in perception*. MIT Press.

Pouw, W. T. J. L., & de Jong, H. L. (2015). Rethinking situated and embodied social psychology. *Theory & Psychology, 25*(4), 411–433. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354315585661

Ratcliffe, M. (2005). The feeling of being. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, *12*(8–10), 43–60.

Roffe, J., & Jones, G. (2009). *Deleuze's philosophical heritage*. Edinburgh University Press.

Scherer, K. J., Schorr, A., & Johnstone, T. (Eds.). (2001). *Appraisal processes in emotion. Theory, methods, research*. Oxford University Press.

Scott, D. (2014). *Gilbert Simondon's psychic and collective individuation: A critical introduction and guide*. Edinburgh University Press.

Sedgwick, E. K., & Frank, A. (1995). Shame in the cybernetic fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins. *Critical Inquiry*, *21*(2), 496–522. https://doi.org/10.1086/448761

Simondon, G. (1958). *Du mode d'existence des objets techniques* [On the mode of existence of technical objects]. Aubier.

Simondon, G. (1964). *L'individu et sa genèse physico-biologique* [The individual and its biophysical genesis]. Presses Universitaires de France.

Simondon, G. (1992). The genesis of the individual. In J. Crary & S. Kwinter (Eds.), *Incorporations: Zone 6* (pp. 296–319). Zone.

Simondon, G. (1995). *L'individu et sa genèse physico-biologique* [The individual and its physicobiological genesis]. Jerome Millon. (Original work published 1964)

Simondon, G. (2006). *Cours sur la perception*. Les Editions de la Transparence. (Original work published 1964–65)

Simondon, G. (2007). *L'individuation psychique et collective à la lumière des notions de forme, information, potential et métastabilité* [Psychic and collective individuation in light of the notions of form and information]. Aubier.

Simondon, G. (2009). The position and the problem of ontogenesis. *Parrhesia*, *7*, 4–16.

Simondon, G. (in press). *Individuation in light of the notions of form and information* (T. Adkins, Trans.). Minnesota University Press. (Original work published 1964)

Slaby, J., & Muhlhoff, R. (2019). Affect. In J. Slaby & C. von Scheve (Eds.), *Affective societies: Key concepts* (pp. 27–41). Routledge.

Slaby, J., & von Scheve, C. (Eds.). (2019). *Affective societies. Key concepts*. Routledge.

Slunecko, T. (2008). *Von der Konstruktion zur dynamischen Konstitution: Beobachtungen auf der eigenen Spur* [From construction to dynamic constitution: Tracking one's own path]. Facultas.

Spinoza, B. (2002). *Spinoza: Complete works*. Hackett.

Stenner, P. (2008). A. N. Whitehead and subjectivity. *Subjectivity*, *22*(1), 90–109. https://doi.org/10.1057/sub.2008.4

Stenner, P. (2017). *Liminality and experience: A transdisciplinary approach to the psychosocial*. Palgrave.

Stenner, P., Greco, M., & Motzkau, J. F. (2017). Introduction to the special issue on liminal hotspots. *Theory & Psychology*, *27*(2), 141–146. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354316687867

Szakolczai, A. (2009). Liminality and experience: Structuring transitory situations and transformative events. *International Political Anthropology*, *2*(1), 141–172.

Szakolczai, A. (2017). Permanent (trickster) liminality: The reasons of the heart and of the mind. *Theory & Psychology*, *27*(2), 231–248. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354317694095

Thomassen, B. (2014). *Liminality and the modern. Living through the in-between*. Ashgate.

Thompson, E. (2007). *Mind in life: Biology, phenomenology, and the sciences of mind*. Belknap Press.

Thompson, E., & Varela, F. J. (2001). Radical embodiment: Neural dynamics and consciousness. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, *5*(10), 418–425. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1364-6613(00)01750-2

Thrift, N. (2008). *Non-Representational theory: Space, politics, affect*. Routledge.

Torrance, S. (Ed.). (2005). Enactive experience [Special issue]. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 4(4).

Torrance, S. (Ed.). (2007). Enactive experience [Special issue]. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 6(4).

Toscano, A. (2009). Gilbert Simondon. In G. Jones & J. Roffe (Eds.), *Gilles Deleuze's philosophical lineage* (pp. 380–398). Edinburgh University Press.

Tucker, I. (2018). Deleuze, Simondon and the "problem" of psychological life. *Annual Review of Critical Psychology*, *14*, 127–143.

Varela, F. J., Thompson, E., & Rosch, E. (2016). *The embodied mind: Cognitive science and human experience*. MIT Press.

Ward, D., Silverman, D., & Villalobos, M. (2017). Introduction: The varieties of enactivism. *Topoi*, *36*(3), 365–375. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11245-017-9484-6

Weichold, M. (2016). Mastering sociocultural contingencies: On extending the sensorimotor theory to the domain of culture. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, *23*(5–6), 203–227.

Weichold, M. (2018). Situated agency: Towards an affordance-based, sensorimotor theory of action. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, *17*(4), 761–785. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-017-9548-5

Wetherell, M. (2015). Trends in the turn to affect: A social psychological critique. *Body and Society*, *21*(2), 139–166. https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X14539020

Whitehead, A. N. (1985). *Process and reality. An essay in cosmology* (D. R. Griffin & D. W. Sherburne, Eds.). The Free Press. (Original work published 1927–1928)

Wrbouschek, M., & Slunecko, T. (2020). Moods in transition: Theorizing the affective-dynamic constitution of situatedness [Manuscript submitted for publication].

Yovel, Y. (Ed.). (1999). *Desire and affect: Spinoza as psychologist. Papers presented at the third Jerusalem conference (Ethica III)*. Little Room Press.

Chapter 2) Moods in transition: Theorizing the affective-dynamic constitution of situatedness

Authors

Markus Wrbouschek & Thomas Slunecko

Abstract

In this paper we draw from Gilbert Simondon's work in order to develop a conceptual perspective on moods as transitory, dynamic, and holistic affective processes, manifesting the persistence of pre-individual tensions throughout processes of individuation. In defending our proposal we focus on two features of mood experiences that have traditionally proven conceptually challenging: (1) the intentionality of moods and (2) their phenomenal status. By revisiting Colombetti's theory of moods as affectively scaffolded and Slaby's theory of moods as disclosive postures we show how a Simondonian approach might enrich current enactive as well as phenomenological theorizing about moods.

1. Introduction

Among the varieties of affective experiences that have been discussed in the psychological literature (see for instance Armon-Jones, 2019; Batson, Shaw, & Oleson, 1992; Beedy, Terry, & Lane, 2005, Davidson, 1994; Frijda, 1993; Frijda, Mesquita, Sonnemans & van Goozen, 1987, Russell & Barrett, 1999), mood experiences have proven to be conceptually most challenging. According to Frijda (1993, p. 381), moods are usually distinguished from prototypical emotions by one of three criteria: duration, intensity and intentionality. The first two concern the question of mood's phenomenal character – how moods unfold as subjective experiences. Conceptually, it has been the intentionality criterion that has received the most consideration. In this regard, moods have been described as diffuse and global (Frijda, 1993, p. 381, Siemer, 2009, p. 256). While prototypical emotions are directed at specific objects or situations (as in the case of a fear-reaction to a frightening snake), moods seem to lack an intentional object. In first-

person accounts this is indicated by the fact that respondents often report moods to be about 'everything', 'the whole world', but also 'nothing in particular' (Frijda, Mesquita, Sonnemans, & van Goozen, 1991, p. 190; Sizer, 2000, p. 745). However, even in the latter case, respondents usually sense their current affective experience as being about 'something'.

The apparent diffuseness and globality of mood experiences has led to different theoretical interpretations and contradicting conceptual definitions in the literature (for an overview of existing mood definitions, see Luomala & Laaksonen, 2000). In an attempt to categorise different mood conceptions, Siemer (2009) distinguishes between feeling theories and dispositional theories of moods. While proponents of feeling theory (among which Siemer lists Averill, 1991; Clore, Schwartz & Conway. 1994; Oatley & Johnson-Laird, 1987; and Russell, 2003) would argue that moods are bodily feelings and thus non-intentional in a strict sense, dispositional theories (see for instance, Griffiths, 1997, pp. 248–257; Lormand, 1985; and Sizer, 2000) argue that moods are pre-intentional in forming what Siemer calls "*temporary dispositions* to respond to a wide variety of situations with emotional reactions (experiences) that correspond to the mood" (Siemer, 2009, p. 257). Upon this view, moods need not be about anything particular to still contribute to the way in which we affectively relate toward the world. In a recent article, Mitchell (2019) discusses some problems of existing approaches to the intentionality problem. On the one hand, feeling heories eliminate the problem of explaining the apparent lack of (specific) object-relatedness in regard to moods, but do so at the expense of no longer being able to account for the sense of *about-ness* (Mitchell, 2019, p. 121) that typically accompanies reports of moods. This first-person evidence is quite robust, even if respondents cannot give an accurate description of what their current affection might actually be about. On the other hand, Mitchell discusses three main objections against a dispositional view (Mitchell, 2019, p. 120). First, it cannot account for the distinct feeling quality of moods which is felt even in the absence of specific mood-congruent emotional responses to occurrent events. After all, being in a mood has a distinct, experiential quality, which is not dependent on the emergence of corresponding targeted emotions. For instance, it is perfectly possible for someone to wake up in the morning feeling distinctly cheerful without this alleged disposition actually manifesting in any particular instance of a mood-congruent emo-

tion. Second, moods influence behaviour without the mediation of being actualized in an emotion. Being in a cheerful mood one might be tempted to smile at a stranger in the street and it is not necessary to experience a mediating emotion like joy about meeting this particular stranger in order for this to happen. Third, even in cases where a particular mood facilitates emotional responses, this usually extends to a variety of emotions and not one specific (type of) emotion (Mitchell, 2019, p. 120).

The problematic of mood intentionality will be at the centre of the alternative perspective on mood experiences which we develop in this paper. In order to be able to present our argument, we will take a closer look at the second, less extensively discussed dimension of mood experiences: their phenomenal character to which Frijda's duration and intensity criteria allude. This leads us to conceptualising moods as *transitory, dynamic and relational affective processes*. Drawing on Gilbert Simondon's work on processes of individuation (Simondon, 1992, 2020), we argue that the global and diffuse intentional directedness of moods is not a sign of a *lack* of world orientedness but of how moods relate to the processual unfolding of world relatedness, or – in Simondon's terms – ontogenesis (Simondon, 2009). We build our argument as follows: in the first section, we revisit recent phenomenological and enactive conceptualisations of moods. Both emphasise that moods should not be seen as *states* of psycho-physical being, but as part of an ongoing transaction between an affectively concerned actor and their environment. In the second section, we turn to Simondon in order to take a closer look at the process through which a relation between an individual and their environment emerges. Two aspects will be crucial here: (1) the primordiality of the *process* of becoming, which undermines any attempt to found theoretical concepts on ontological givens (be it 'the' individual, or a 'first principle' of individuation); (2) preindividuality as the ontological condition of possibility for ongoing processes of individuation. Through our reading of Simondon we show that affectivity plays a pivotal role in the process of individuation; in turn, this conceptualization of affect helps us to develop a conceptual perspective on the functional role of moods in the third and final section.

2. Moods as affective actor-environment transactions

Moods typically unfold over longer periods of time. This is one of the discerning features of mood experiences (Frijda, 1993, p. 381). What has rarely been considered, though, is *how* moods unfold dynamically during one and the same mood episode. Moods are usually treated as more or less homogeneous affective *states*, much in the way that distinctive emotions are. However, as the close relation between mood and notions like whim, temper, or fancy in everyday language suggests, particular occurrences of moods can be quite instable, flickering and oscillating experiences. Moods seem to be constantly prone to shifts and swings, which often leave the person living through them puzzled and wondering, as to why and how sudden swings in their mood occur. Despite this, the processual dynamics of moods has not received much attention in the psychological literature (Parkinson, Totterdell, Briner, & Reynolds, 1996, p. 105). Even where a dynamic perspective on moods is taken, the changes in affective quality are usually interpreted as indices of one mood transitioning into another and not as part of a temporally extended episode. This has been noticed by Parkinson et al. (1996, pp. 105–106), who suggest that the dynamics of mood swings might alternatively be viewed as a sign that moods are themselves processes of change. Rather than conceptualising moods as more or less homogeneous affective *states*, one should look at them as part of ongoing transactions between an actor and their environment. In this regard Parkinson et al. have been following Lazarus' (1991; see Parkinson et al., 1996, pp. 63–67) transactional approach and have been calling for more longitudinal studies of mood's unfolding over time. Since their seminal publication, the volume of studies that deal with the processual development of moods has grown significantly.[1] However, studies still tend to split the phenomenon by treating each swing in the phenomenal quality of the affective experience as a transition from one mood into another. This is the case specifically in empirical studies that rely on standard self-report questionnaires of moods (Watson & Vaidya, 2003). There, the affective experience of going through a mood episode is mostly reduced to repeated generalised estimations of one's overall mood at certain points in the process. A transition from positive to less positive or even negative affect would then qualify as a change *of* moods

---

[1] A quick search on PsychInfo for the terms 'mood' AND 'process' resulted in 3631 articles since Parkinson et al.´s seminal publication. However, the majority of these papers seems to use 'process' synonymous with 'lasting longer' and does not focus specifically on the immanent dynamics of the experience.

and not as a gradual shift *within* an ongoing transaction. As one can see, the underlying problem is as much a conceptual one as it is a methodological one. In this paper, we focus on the conceptual problematic only. Our principal questions are these: What if the changing of moods was not a transition from one affective entity to another? What if the shifts in the overall experience of moods pertain to phases in a meaningful transaction between actor and environment?

In what follows we develop the idea that moods are experiences of transition and thus have to be conceptually embedded in a relational and process theoretical framework. Forays in this direction have already been made by phenomenologists in the field of cognitive science and philosophy (Elpidorou & Freeman, 2015; Freeman, 2014; Slaby, 2017) and also by enactivists in the cognitive sciences and psychology (Hutto & Myin, 2013; Maiese, 2014; Mc Gann, De Jaegher, & Di Paolo, 2013; Pouw & de Jong, 2015; Thompson, 2007). All of them share the idea that affectivity (or experience in general) is part of the meaningful interaction of a situated agent with their environment. To expand on the important insight that affectivity is thus relational as well as processually emergent, we will discuss mood specific concepts of situated affectivity from each of these theoretical traditions in the following sub-sections.

2.1. Heidegger's existential analysis of 'disposedness': moods disclosing being-in-the-world

Within the phenomenological tradition, interest in mood is prominently linked to the work of Martin Heidegger (1992; 1993). For Heidegger, moods constitute "fundamental modes of existence that are disclosive of the way one is or finds oneself" (Freeman, 2014, p. 445). Different scholars (Elpidorou & Freeman, 2015; Freeman, 2014; Freeman & Elpidorou, 2015; Slaby, 2017) have been emphasising the importance of his contributions to contemporary debates in the philosophy of emotions and beyond. With Heidegger they argue that world-orientedness is based on an affective relation which precedes (rational) comprehension and (motivated) action. Moods are crucial to this, because they form the most basic level of being's affective situatedness. Within the scope of this paper, it is impossible to give a comprehensive introduction to Heidegger's work. Nevertheless, as this might not be familiar territory for psychologists, we have to sketch out at least

some key ideas before discussing how Heidegger's perspective on moods relates to our concern in this paper.

In dealing with Heidegger, one has to be aware of some terminological intricacies. On a conceptual level, Heidegger does not speak of moods as such, but uses the German term 'Befindlichkeit' (Heidegger, 1993, pp. 134–142), for which there is no adequate English translation. Among the possible renditions, there are 'findingness', 'disposedness' and 'attunement', all of which capture certain aspects of 'Befindlichkeit', but cannot account for the wide ranging connotations it carries (Slaby, 2018b). We will use 'findingness', when specifically dealing with Heidegger's writings as it best captures the existentially world-disclosing properties of fundamental moods.

An important starting point in dealing with Heidegger lies in the insight that moods are not intentional affective states or conscious valuations of events or objects. In fact, they do not pertain to anything specific within the experiential field at all. At the same time, and this is the crucial twist, moods are not merely non-intentional bodily feelings either, as for instance proponents of a psychological feeling theory (Siemer, 2009) would argue. Heidegger's gist is that moods occupy an ontologically primordial locus in the structure of the experiential field. As Kenaan puts it, they "are not episodes *in* our field of experience but basic modes *of* that field" (Kenaan, 2017, p. 1471, our emphasis). In this sense, fundamental moods can be characterised as pre-intentional, affective background structures of experience, serving as the condition of possibility for the various ways in which we find ourselves "constellated" (Slaby, 2017, p. 15) into the world.

Heidegger employs a strict distinction between occurrent affective experiences (including emotion, sentiments, feelings, but also moods in the lay meaning of the word), which he regards to be mostly surface phenomena, and findingness as an ontological qualification of what also potentially obscure an existentially disclosive dimension of moods proper (Slaby, 2017, pp. 11–14; 2018b). Consequently, the ontic variations in occurrent moods do not concern him further. Instead, he argues (Heidegger, 1993, p. 134) that findingness is the precondition for any intentional orientation toward the world in the most general sense of the word. It constitutes *openness* (Thompson & Zahavi, 2007, p. 72), which is the ontological foundation for all kinds of world-directed experience. In an attempt to make this more graspable, Slaby employs the concept of 'disclosive posture' (Slaby,

2018a), a term initially coined by Withy (2015). Withy defines disclosive postures as "ways of finding ourselves situated, where this means both that they are ways of finding ourselves and our situation (i.e. that they are findingly disclosive) and that they are ways of being situated in the world (i.e. postures)" (Withy, 2015, p. 23). As such, the concept involves a passive-receptive dimension – becoming aware of one's being there –, as well as an active dimension – assuming a certain comportment toward the environment one so finds oneself already placed in. A dual structure emerges, in which findingness involves both: being affected by the facticity of one's situation and at the same time being disposed to deal with the situational arrangement one finds oneself in (Slaby, 2017, p. 15).

At first glance, one might be tempted to liken the concept of disclosive posture to dispositional theories of moods (Siemer, 2009). However, there are important objections to this, which hearken back to the intentional characterisation of moods to which we referred in the introduction. Firstly, findingness' ontological status beyond the everyday experience of moods means that there cannot be any direct link to what presents itself as occurrent mood state. On the contrary, it is precisely by giving in to everyday whims and tempers that one risks fundamentally misunderstanding oneself (in an existential sense). Secondly, and much in line with Mitchell's first and second objection against the dispositional view on moods, disclosive postures constitute a sui generis mode of disclosing the world which does not depend on mediation through targeted emotions. Likewise, the orientation toward the world (so disclosed) precedes any disposition to feel or act in a specific way. As a whole, findingness constitutes an autonomous manifestation of how one is and fares, distinctly different from and ontologically primordial to occurrent instances of mood or emotions.

From a psychological perspective, this rigid demarcation between the ontic, everyday experience of moods and the existentially disclosive findingness raises the question, whether Heidegger's theory can contribute at all to a psychological understanding of moods? Within the context of a phenomenology of psychiatry, Ratcliffe (2002, 2005) has been using Heidegger's ideas in developing a concept of existential feelings as "[w]ays of finding oneself in a world", "presupposed spaces of experiential possibility, which shape the various ways in which things can be experienced" (Ratcliffe, 2005, p. 45). According to Ratcliffe, a fundamental feeling of 'being' is at stake in clinically relevant experiences such as feeling 're-

moved from the world', or 'not quite there'. Cases of severe depression, for instance, would reveal the importance (and fragility) of this fundamental sense of *being* that precedes (rational) comprehension, selfhood, or practical orientation (Ratcliffe, 2013, 2014). While Ratcliffe's work can show us that a fundamental, affective grounding of experience is in fact important, the question remains, whether this can help us understand experiences of mood as they assail us in average everyday situations. Recently, Stephan (2017) proposed to integrate Ratcliffe's concept of 'existential feelings' in a layered account of moods. According to Stephan (2017, p. 1489), moods should be seen as "blended state[s]", which – while being experienced as distinct instances of mood – would result from an "amalgam" of mood components situated on different levels of experience. Existential feelings would then form the basic layer, establishing a fundamental sense of world-relatedness. The overall mood experience would then be modified and shaped by the affective contribution from one or more of the other three layers: a socially imbued layer, which involves all kinds of social scaffolding of moods (compare section 1.2. below), an emotion aftereffect layer, which would be formed by the lingering effects of "emotional entanglements […] too strong or too persistent to be regulated in good time" (Stephan, 2017, p. 1491) and finally, a shallow layer, constituted by moods that would result from organismic and environmental conditions (such as good weather leading to an immediate cheering up effect; Stephan, 2017, p. 1492).

While a layered account can explain some of the dynamic variations of moods to which we pointed at the start of this section, we are sceptical that it is possible to integrate these diverse concepts in one coherent account of moods. One reason for this is that it does not seem plausible, how elicitors on such disparate levels (existential, social, environmental, etc.) might condense into one coherent affective experience, even if this experience would be thought as dynamically evolving and changing in time. Even if this was accepted, an epistemological concern would arise from the ontic/ontological distinction on which a Heideggerian account is built. For Ratcliffe this does not seem to pose such a problem as he is not claiming to say anything specific about moods. Rather, his claim is that existential feelings are a distinctive class of phenomena which is a necessary and important part of being-in-the-world (Ratcliffe, 2005, p. 46). However, this brings us back to the question, how we can conceptualize the experience of *dynamically*

changing moods? With regard to these and based on our discussion so far we claim two things: (1) that there is a distinct sense of going through a mood experience which lasts as long as the episode itself and (2) that the experiential evidence allows for oscillations, shifts and swings as part of *one and the same* mood episode.

As we have seen in Heidegger, the dynamics of occurrent moods are relegated to the status of surface phenomena. This has recently been noticed by Kenaan, who states that "Heidegger is […] fully aware of the changing of moods […]. And yet, this change does not interest him in and of itself, but becomes relevant to his project only in being indicative of the permanent underlying structure that ultimately concerns him" (Kenaan, 2017, p. 1473). Upon this basis, Kenaan fleshes out an upshot for a research program to maintain Heidegger's primary idea that moods are disclosive of a relational "intertwining between subject and world" (Kenaan, 2017, p. 1477) which would be prior to reflexive comprehension, practical motivation and the like. At the same time, and instead of focusing on the "changeless core" (Kenaan, 2017, p. 1474) of mood experiences, he urges to acknowledge that moods "are never given as simple self-identical states, but appear as constellations of a dynamism, an ongoing process of interaction, that makes them intrinsically volatile" (Kenaan, 2017, p. 1477). This theoretical commitment is built on two founding principles: plurality and relationality (ibid.). Although Kenaan's own proposal remains a sketch, we fully concur with the general aim and scope of his project. However, in our own conceptual proposal, which we present in what follows, we draw from Gilbert Simondon, whose potential contribution to psychological theorizing is yet to be fully recognized (De Boever, Murray, Roffe, & Woodward, 2012). To be able to see, how Simondon can enrich our current theorizing on moods we first take a detour discussing Colombetti's enactivist position regarding moods as part of affective niche construction (Colombetti, 2017a). With Colombetti, we further emphasise the processual and relational nature of moods and from there, we develop our perspective in the following sections.

2.2. Colombetti on affective niche construction: mood scaffolds

Over the last few years, enactivist perspectives (Colombetti, 2014; Colombetti & Thompson, 2008; Hanna & Maiese, 2009; Hutto & Myin, 2013) have been adopt-

ed by psychologists (see, for instance, Da Rold, 2018; McGann, De Jaegher, & Di Paolo, 2013; Pouw & de Jong, 2015) placing the interaction between a concerned actor and their environment at the centre of a theory of embodied and situated cognition and agency. Within the enactivist framework, affectivity plays an important role; however, there is no direct reference to the specific distinctions between emotions, mood, and other varieties of affect as discussed in the psychological literature. Recently, Colombetti (2017a, 2017b) proposed to think of moods as embodied and situated experiences:

> As embodied beings, we do not float about in a vacuum, but we interact with the world and with the animate and inanimate entities that are in it; relatedly, our moods do not depend only on the state of our organism, but also on our interactions with the world (Colombetti, 2017a, p. 1441).

Colombetti employs the concept of 'scaffolding', originally developed in the context of niche construction theory (Odling-Smee, Laland, & Feldman, 2003; Sterelny, 2010) in order to understand the way in which our affective relation to the world is supported, enhanced and often enabled in the first place by structural components of the actor's environment (Colombetti & Krueger, 2015; Sterelny, 2010). In the literature, examples of scaffolding range from rather short term support of specific acts (as in the use of a calculator for performing a basic computational task) to lasting functional couplings (as in the continuous use of a hearing aid or a walking cane) which might become integral part of an actor's practical orientation toward the world and even be experienced as part of oneself (Colombetti, 2017a, p. 1441). In regard to mood experiences, Colombetti is interested in how the overall affective makeup of world-relatedness is brought forth through scaffolding techniques, creating a specific affective environment which is then incorporated as a specific feeling. Thus, "moods are not simply *passive* responses to environmental stimuli, but […] *we act* on our surroundings to influence our moods, scaffolding them and creating short- and long-term *affective niches* to which we adapt, and in which we achieve moods that would otherwise not be possible" (Colombetti, 2017a, p. 1444). By focusing on the practical engagement of an actor with their environment, Colombetti conceptualises moods as part of relational transactions (Parkinson et al., 1996) which shape not only the affective

experience, but the whole of the emergent actor-environment relation. In creating an affective niche "we actively manipulate the environment so that we can be passively influenced by it" (Colombetti, 2017a, p. 1444).

It is important here that, within an enactivist framework, neither actor nor environment can be understood as pre-existing the process through which the actor-environment relation is brought forth (Weichold, 2018). In this sense, phenomenological and enactivist approaches coincide in locating mood experiences within an emergent relational process and thus prior to any already-established subject-object configuration. However, with regard to moods, the Heideggerian approach tends to emphasise the existentially-disclosing properties of (fundamental) moods. Thus they are concerned mostly with what Kenaan referred to as the "changeless core" (Kenaan, 2017, p. 1474) of moods, eschewing the phenomenal variability of everyday mood experiences (as occurrent phenomena).[2] On the other hand, Colombetti focuses primarily on the interconnection between affectivity and everyday practice, i.e. the processual shaping of moods in a temporally extended transaction between actor and world. In doing so, she seems to support a transactional approach to theorizing moods accounting for changes and shifts in the affective experience of going through the process of becoming affectively situated. However, as far as we can see, Colombetti is not clear enough regarding the specific role or function of mood experiences within the emergent actor-environment relation. On the one hand she argues that the experience of mood is scaffolded *by* features of the environment, while on the other hand making it appear as if moods are part of the process *through* which an affective niche is brought forth in the first place. This is where we turn to Simondon who shares certain key ideas with the enactive framework, in particular by connecting the question of affective experience to the ongoing processual unfolding of relatedness. By focusing on the intrinsically conflicted, tensed and irresolvable nature of ontogenesis, he opens up a different perspective on moods as transitory experiences of change.

---

[2] We are aware that there are important reservations to the way we contrasted these two approaches which trace back to different (albeit at points intersecting) philosophical lineages. For instance, the temporal dimension of findingness is more intricate than our discussion makes it appear (see for detailed discussions of this topic Freeman & Elpidorou, 2015; Slaby, 2015). However, a more in-depth exploration of these philosophical intricacies would be beyond the scope of this paper.

3. An alternative perspective on moods – Simondon's theory of individuation

Simondon was a psychologist and philosopher who is best known for his work on the philosophy of technology (De Boever, Murray, & Roffe, 2012b; Simondon, 2011). However, in recent years his equally inventive work on processes of individuation is being rediscovered (Combes, 2013; De Boever, Murray & Roffe, 2012a; Wrbouschek & Slunecko, 2020). Simondon has strong ties to thinkers like Deleuze, Bergson and Whitehead, who share his commitment to process theory, relational ontology and an anti-substantialist perspective on individuation (see for introductions to his work Combes, 2013; De Boever, Murray, & Roffe, 2012a; Wrbouschek & Slunecko, 2020). Within this theoretical context, Simondon's aim is "to understand the individual from the perspective of the process of individuation rather than the process of individuation by means of the individual" (Simondon, 1992, p. 300). By placing the process of individuation before the emergent properties of the already constituted individual, Simondon challenges the way in which Western philosophers (and psychologists) have been used to conceive of individuality. Instead of seeking out the conditions of necessity (or: first principle) by which a given individual being came into being, Simondon regards individual being merely as a relational term within an ongoing process of ontogenesis:

> The individual would then be grasped as a relative reality, a certain phase of being which supposes a pre-individual reality prior to it and which, even after individuation, does not fully exist all by itself, for individuation does not exhaust in a single stroke the potentials of pre-individual reality […]. (Simondon, 2020, p. 3)

Simondon's original contribution to psychological theorizing is to be found first in a shift of perspective. Instead of focusing on given (e.g. already constituted) manifestations of individual being – which can range from overarching notions of identity and personhood all the way to what we would call a psychic act (an instance of feeling, sensing, etc.) – Simondon is interested in the processual unfolding of life (Simondon, 2020). Emphasising processual becoming over static being and relational emergence over self-enclosed (conceptual) entities, Simondon provides a meta-psychological framework for formulating our conception of moods. We

develop this argument in three steps. First, we explain Simondon's concepts of individuation and pre-individual reality which form the conceptual backbone of his approach. In a second step, we discuss Simondon's perspective on affectivity as a crucial dimension of individuation. As Simondon himself does not make a more fine-grained distinction between different affective experiences, we connect his ideas with our discussion of the specific experiential features of moods as discussed in a third and final step.

3.1. The preindividual, psychic and collective individuation

Turning to the work of Simondon, two meta-psychological concepts are crucial to his project: the *pre-individual (*or *pre-individual reality*) and the transductive emergence of a relative coupling of individual and associated milieu via psychic and collective *individuation.* By starting out with a discussion of pre-individuality Simondon makes it clear that what scientists and common sense alike consider as an empirical datum – the individual being as presently actualized – is merely a phase in an ongoing process. In order to understand the dynamics of this extended process, Simondon burrows from thermodynamic theory in referring to the notion of metastability as a "state that transcends the classical opposition between stability and instability, and that is charged with potentials for a becoming" (Barthélémy, 2012, p. 217). In thermodynamics, metastability expresses the precarious energetic situation of a system at the verge of structural determination. As such, pre-individual being is characterized as a situation of tension and inner conflict. At the same time, it is charged with a multiplicity of potentials for developing an organizational structure. Consequently, individuation comes down to a system resolving its inherent tensions by establishing a structural organization. However, with reference to the notion of structural organization, Simondon rejects the idea that pre-individual tensions could ever become resolved once and for all:

> [I]ndividuation does not exhaust pre-individual reality and […] a regime of metastability is not merely sustained by the individual but carried by it, such that the constituted individual transports along with it a certain associated charge of pre-individual reality that is animated by all the potentials which characterize it; an individuation is relative, like a structural change in a physical system; a certain level of potential remains, and further individuations are still possible. (Simondon, 2020, p. 8)

Founding individuation on an energetic conception of pre-individual reality exceeding and undermining structural stability allows Simondon to develop a process theory of individuation. Individuation moves in successive phases of (temporary) organizational stabilization and destabilization necessitating further individuations.

Simondon's initial formulation of the concepts of pre-individual reality and its phasic resolution in individuation applies, in principle, to all living beings (Simondon, 2020, pp. 167–256). What separates different forms of life according to Simondon is the mode by which preindividual tensions are resolved in each case. Given the scope of this paper, we here consider only Simondon's perspective on individuation in human beings. In Simondon's view, it is the discerning feature of human life that an initial individuation by which a bio-physiological organism is brought into being is perpetuated by what Simondon refers to as *psychic and collective individuation*. As a result, human beings individuate not only by establishing an external relation to their physical as well as social environment, but by developing an internal organization which allows them to continue individuating by preserving a certain charge of potential energy within their organizational structure (Simondon, 2020, p. 7).

In order to further unpack this complex idea we refer back to our discussion of Colombetti's enactive account of affective niche construction. There is a close connection between Simondon's work and the enactive approach in the shared rejection of "traditional cognitivism, and other forms of functionalism that conceive of cognition [and mental activity in general, comment by the authors] mainly as information processing over internal representations" (McGann et al., 2013, p. 203). As we have seen, enactivists regard psychological phenomena (such as distinctive feeling states, moods, etc.) as the emergent result of ongoing interactions between actors and their environment. In this sense, mentalisation (and its manifestation in distinct psychological acts) is already an emergent result of this ongoing engagement. Simondon makes a similar point in emphasising that pre-individual reality cannot be contained within the individual. Rather, a bio-psychological structure can only manifest relative to an *associated milieu* (Barthélémy, 2012, pp. 207–208). In Simondon's meta-psychological conception, this is the case because the potentials contained in a pre-individual phase precede any clear-cut subject-object demarcation. Therefore, Simondon refers to the

notion of a 'system' rather than speaking of a human being. Similarly, Simondon eschews the notion of adaptivity as this would already presuppose a constituted individual trying to adapt to a pre-defined environmental situation (Simondon, 2020, pp. 304–308). Neither individual nor milieu exist as separate terms in a pre-individual state. Rather it is only through a processual resolution of the conflicting potential trajectories of pre-individual reality that a relational individual-environment constellation emerges. But how then, does Simondon conceive of the emergence of a bio-psychological individual capable of establishing a relative unity and stable relations with their environment (however precarious and temporary)? This is, where Simondon introduces affectivity as a mediating concept and where we are led back to our initial topic of transitional moods.

3.2. The affective-emotive and processes of individuation
We have seen that the individual in Simondon is but a relative term. It is relative in two senses: firstly, becoming individual implies becoming structurally oriented toward an environment adaptive to the actual phase of individuation; secondly, any phase of individuation (which is what being individual comes down after all) contains a certain charge of pre-individual reality and is in that sense open to further individuations. In human life, this dual relativity is not merely an external relation to an outside and a prior phase of existence; rather, human life participates in the process of individuation: "The psyche continues vital individuation in a being that, in order to resolve its own problematic, is itself forced to intervene as an element of the problem through its action as subject" (Simondon, 2020, p. 9). But how is this possible? How can a subject emerge as an active force in the process of individuation without being given as an ontological precondition of this process?
Simondon's answer to this is that, in order for a bio-psychological system to emerge, there has to be an internal resonance inherent to the individuating system by which the disparate potentials of the pre-individual state are aligned in a polarity between an interior (psyche, consciousness) and an exterior (individual-milieu). This dual polarity is brought forth in the individuating individual through the complementary functions of perceptivity (Simondon, 2020, pp. 257–272) and affectivity, which Simondon refers to as *the affectivo-emotive* (Simondon, 2020,

pp. 272–291). The former concerns the orientational coupling of a perceiving subject opposite a world of perceptive units and is the precondition for signification. The concept of the affectivo-emotive, to which we have to limit our discussion here, appears first in the context of investigating the role of consciousness in individuation. Contrasting his perspective with a common dichotomic reading of the psychoanalytic topology of the conscious and unconscious, Simondon situates affectivity at the intersection between conscious experience and the unconscious (Simondon, 2020, pp. 273–274). Similar to contemporary representatives of the turn to affect (Clough & Halley, 2007; Gregg & Seigworth, 2010), Simondon regards the affectivo-emotive to be about a prefiguration of conscious, intentional experience and action. In his view, it is the "center of individuality" (Simondon, 2020, p. 273) insofar as it provides "the link between the relation of the individual to itself and the link of the individual to the world" (Simondon, 2020, p. 273). In its most basic functionality, the affectivo-emotive can be defined as orientation. It mediates between the receptive awareness of a disparity (pre-individual) within the current phase of individuation and the anticipated discovery of a potential "unity of the being" (Simondon, 2020, p. 289). The peculiar choice of terminology by Simondon captures the inherent dynamic of the affectivo- emotive´s orienting function. At its one pole, affectivity can be conceived of as finding oneself at the pre-individual level which in itself refers to a disintegrated experience, marked by a plurality of intensities: as such it cannot provide consistency or coherence of experience:

> [A]ffection does not have any active consistency and allows itself to be penetrated and to be driven off by another affection; there is a certain closure of emotion, whereas there is no closure of affection; affection returns, presents itself again, but does not resist; […] sensation and affection are realities that befall the individuated living being (Simondon, 2020, p. 290, p. 290)

As we will stress in the next section there is a similarity between Simondon's description of the affectivo-emotive and Heidegger's characterization of findingness: both are primordial modes of finding oneself in a situation which precedes and exceeds the organizational structure of one's actual relations to self and world. However, in the above quote it becomes visible that Simondon's affectivity is an oscillating and ephemeral experience incapable of providing a stable fundament

for an individual being relative to its environment. It is the unifying function of the emotive pole which provides the basis for the integration of the disparate affective intensities: "emotion is like an insular temporal unity with its own structure; it drives the living being, gives it a direction, polarizes it, takes up its affectivity, and unifies it" (Simondon, 2020, p. 290).

Simondon's meta-psychological perspective on affectivity is quite at odds with traditional psychological theories of emotions. Firstly, though there is an evaluative dimension involved in the affectivo-emotive, it is not a conscious qualification of an event in the actor's field of experience, but a pre-conscious awareness of a certain disparity or synergy within an emerging field of experience. The pleasure/pain continuum employed in operational definitions of core affective properties in psychology (Ekkekakis, 2013; Russell, 1980; Watson & Vaidya, 2003) is therefore only one aspect of an encompassing orientational process. Secondly, in Simondon's perspective, emotion cannot be comprehended at the level of situated responses to specified stimuli within an already constituted field of experience. Rather, the affectivo-emotive function is what allows for an experiential field to emerge in the first place. Focusing on the unifying emotional response to (features of) the world capture only the far end of the affective dimension. Instead of founding a theory of emotion only on the evaluative act in which the affective problematic resolves, Simondon extends the conceptual scope to account for the transition from a state of pre-individual tension all the way toward an oriented relation between the individual and their environment

4. Moods in transition

We set out by discussing the conceptual problematic of mood experiences referring to (1) the intentionality of moods, that is, the supposed lack of an intentional directedness toward specific events or objects within an actor's field of experience, and (2) their phenomenal character as global affective experiences that last for longer time periods. With regard to (2) we emphasized that mood episodes are inherently ephemeral, prone to sudden swings, changes and fluctuations both in intensity and quality. While these swings have often been treated as transitions between different mood states we argue that this 'swingi-ness' is a constitutive feature of the dynamic profile of mood episodes. In the first section we discussed a Heideggerian perspective on mood experiences which is based on the idea that

moods are about finding oneself situated within the world. Heidegger's approach, as it is for instance employed by Ratcliffe in his 'existential feelings' (Ratcliffe, 2005) concept and by Slaby in his concept of 'disclosive postures' (Slaby, 2018a), rests on a philosophically important distinction between occurrent affective experience (everyday moods) and an ontologically primordial domain of fundamentally disclosive moods. This – as Kenaan (2017) critically remarked – has led proponents of the Heideggerian approach to focusing more on the enduring, changeless features of moods and less on the their inherent variability. We follow Kenaan's suggestion to think of moods as "constellations of a dynamism, an ongoing process of interaction, that makes them intrinsically volatile" (Kenaan, 2017, p. 1477). In Colombetti's enactive approach to moods as affectively scaffolded and thus emerging from the ongoing engagement between an actor and their environment we found a conceptual foray in this direction. However, Colombetti remains somewhat vague concerning the functional role that mood experiences play in the enactive process. At this point, we turned to the work of Simondon. Simondon embeds the discussion of affectivity within a wider framework of individuation. Within this broader framework, the concept of an 'affectivo-emotive' is introduced to account for the specific relation of an individual (relative to their associated milieu) with preindividual reality. In this final section we now apply Simondon's perspective specifically to a conceptualization of mood.

(1) In Simondon, the affectivo-emotive relation orients an individual (as actualized in the current phase of its becoming) toward their inherent pre-individual energetic charge. Thereby, the affectivo-emotive is an experience of difference and alterity first and foremost. As such, it is about the persistence of a certain discrepancy within the individual with regard to its current relations to self and world. This is due to the fact that an individual is incapable of incorporating all of its pre-individual potential within one relational configuration. We argue that within the different varieties of affective experiences which are discussed in the psychological and related literature, moods stand out as the most appropriate referent for the affectivo- emotive function, as their intentional unspecificity can be interpreted in terms of an affective directedness toward the pre-individual.

(2) Referring to Kenaan's argument for a dynamic conception of changing moods we argue that the internal incompatibility of which Simondon speaks with regard to the immanent tensions of an individual-environment system provides a con-

ceptual basis for understanding that "the change in mood means an active altera-
tion of our being, a transmutation of the way in which we are in the world" (Ke-
naan, 2017, p. 1478). By that we refer to the dual structure of the affectivo-
emotive which, while actualising a remnant pre-individual tension within a sub-
ject's relations to self and world, also involves an orientation toward the potential
resolution of these tensions through ensuing cycles of individuation. The tempo-
rally extended, yet unstable and changeable experiential profile of moods can be
understood in this sense as appresenting the transition from one phase of indi-
viduation toward the next one. as transitional affect. Consequently, we propose to
think of moods as experiential manifestation of ongoing changes within a sub-
ject's relation to self and world. It is at the same time an apprehension of a cur-
rent disparity (conflict) and an anticipatory feeling toward (Goldie, 2002, p. 241) a
potential phase of integration.

5. Conclusion

Going forward we think that a Simondon-inspired perspective on affectivity and
moods can inspire research on the processual and relational unfolding of affec-
tive life from a functional perspective. In this sense, we see overlaps and similari-
ties with a number of contemporary debates in psychology and neighbouring
fields. Concluding our discussion we would like to point toward some possible
connections and directions for further developing these ideas.

We see a close similarity between Simondon's perspective and the way Paul
Stenner and others employ Whitehead (Stenner, 2008) in revitalizing a theory of
liminality (Sczakolczai, 2009; Stenner, 2017; Stenner, Greco, & Motzkau, 2017;
Thomassen, 2014). There, it is argued that affectivity (in a broad sense) plays an
important functional role in phases of transition (Greco & Stenner, 2017, p. 151).
Stenners key argument that we need to focus on the fundamentally liminal nature
of human life and thus reformulate our conceptions of psychological phenomena
based on a process theoretical and relational perspective resonates with our own
approach in many ways. In a similar way we have already pointed toward the af-
finity between a Simondon-inspired approach and current developments toward
an enactive, embodied and embedded social psychology (Pouw & de Jong,
2015). Our reading of Colombetti's concept of niche construction is another step
in this direction.

Both of these theoretical lineages can be extended toward debates that have been flourishing in the cultural and social sciences for the past decades and which have led some to even pronounce a paradigmatic 'turn to affect' (Clough & Halley, 2007; Gregg & Seigworth, 2010). Psychologists have yet to fully explore the conceptual potential of this growing body of work. There are considerable terminological and methodological differences between psychological theories of emotions and a theory of affect conceived of as "an impingement or extrusion of a momentary or sometimes more sustained state of relation as well as passage […] of forces and intensities" (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010, p. 1). With our conception of mood we hope to contribute to interdisciplinary exchange and thereby to challenge psychological theorizing.

Finally, and with regard to the ongoing conceptual discussions about different varieties of affect in psychology, we think that the meta-psychological framework of individuation might be used to develop a functional taxonomy of affective experiences with regard to the process of individuation. In such a taxonomy, moods might be considered – as we have argued – as referring to the undecided and conflicted reality of the pre-individual relation. Object-specific emotional responses might then be interpreted as referring to more or less stable phases of individuation, where their intentional directedness would correlate to a temporal resolution of the ambivalences of pre-individual being within an individuated self-world relation.

In a similar vein, we think it will be necessary in future research to further explore the social psychological implications of Simondon's work. In this article we omitted Simondon's discussion of the dual process of psychic and collective individuation by which he embeds psycho-physiological individuation in an even broader context of group formation and the emergence of collective bodies. On this broader level, it might be interesting to see, how an individual-based taxonomy of affective experiences relates to theories of collective affectivity as for instance in recent research on ressentiment[3] and other socially and politically relevant phenomena (Slaby & von Scheve, 2019).

---

[3] An interdisciplinary research cluster on collectivisation and ressentiment is being developed for instance at the Sigmund Freud University: International Research Cluster | Sigmund Freud PrivatUniversitat ¨ (sfu.ac.at).

References

Armon-Jones, C. (2019). *Varieties of affect.* University of Toronto Press.

Averill, J.R. (1980). A constructivist theory of emotion. In Plutchik, R., & Kellerman, H. (Eds.), *Emotion: Theory, research, and experience: Vol. 3. Theories of emotion* (pp. 305–339). Academic Press.

Barthélémy, J.-H. (2012). Fifty key terms in the works of Gilbert Simondon. In De Boever, A., Murray, A., Roffe, J., & Woodward, A. (Eds.), *Gilbert Simondon: Being and technology* (pp. 203–231). Edinburgh University Press.

Batson, C.D., Shaw, L.L., & Oleson, K.C. (1992). Differentiating affect, mood, and emotion: Toward functionally based conceptual distinctions. In Clark, M.S. (Ed.), *Emotion: Review of personality and social psychology: Vol. 13* (pp. 294–326). Sage.

Beedie, C.J., Terry, P.C., & Lane, A.M. (2005). Distinctions between emotion and mood. *Cognition & Emotion, 19*(6), 847–878. doi:10.1080/02699930541000057.

Clore, G.L., Schwarz, N., & Conway, M. (1994). Affective causes and consequences of social information processing. In Wyer, R.S., & Srull, T.K. (Eds.), *Handbook of social cognition* (pp. 323–417). Erlbaum.

Clough, P.T., & Halley, J. (Eds.). (2007). *The affective turn: Theorizing the social.* Duke University Press.

Colombetti, G. (2014). *The feeling body. Affective science meets the enactive mind.* The MIT Press.

Colombetti, G. (2017a). The embodied and situated nature of moods. *Philosophia, 45*, 1437–1451. doi:10.1007/s11406-017-9817-0.

Colombetti, G. (2017b). Enactive affectivity, extended. *Topoi, 36*, 445–455. doi:10.1007/s11245-015-9335-2.

Colombetti, G., & Krueger, J. (2015). Scaffoldings of the affective mind. *Philosophical Psychology, 28*(8), 1157–1176. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1080/09515089.2014.976334.

Colombetti, G., & Thompson, E. (2008). The feeling body: Towards an enactive approach to emotion. In Overton, W.F., Müller, U., & Newman, J. (Eds.), *Developmental perspectives on embodiment and consciousness* (pp. 45–68). Erlbaum.

Combes, M. (2013). *Gilbert Simondon and the philosophy of the transindividual.* MIT Press.

Da Rold, F. (2018). Defining embodied cognition: The problem of situatedness. *New Ideas in Psychology, 51*, 9–14. doi:10.1016/j.newideapsych.2018.04.001.

Davidson, R.J. (1994). On emotion, mood, and related affective constructs. In Ekman, P., & Davidson, R.J. (Eds.), *The nature of emotion* (pp. 51–55). Oxford University Press.

De Boever, A., Murray, A., & Roffe, J. (Eds.). (2012a). *Gilbert Simondon: Being and technology.* Edinburgh University Press.

De Boever, A., Murray, A., & Roffe, J. (2012b). "Technical mentality" revisited: Brian Massumi on Gilbert Simondon. In De Boever, A., Murray, A., Roffe, J., & Woodward, A. (Eds.), *Gilbert Simondon: Being and technology* (pp. 19–36). Edinburgh University Press.

De Boever, A., Murray, A., Roffe, J., & Woodward, A. (2012). Editor's introduction: Simondon, finally. In De Boever, A., Murray, A., Roffe, J., & Woodward, A. (Eds.), *Gilbert Simondon: Being and technology* (pp. vii–xi). Edinburgh University Press.

Ekkekakis, P. (2013). *The measurement of affect, mood, and emotion: A guide for health-behavioral research.* Cambridge University Press.

Elpidorou, A., & Freeman, L. (2015). Affectivity in Heidegger I: Moods and emotions in being and time. *Philosophy Compass, 10*(10), 661–671. doi:10.1111/phc3.12236.

Freeman, L. (2014). Toward a phenomenology of mood. *The Southern Journal of Philosophy, 52*(4), 445–476. doi:10.1111/sjp.12089.

Freeman, L., & Elpidorou, A. (2015). Affectivity in heidegger II: Temporality, boredom, and beyond. *Philosophy Compass, 10*(10), 672–684. doi:10.1111/phc3.12273.

Frijda, N.H. (1993). Moods, emotion episodes, and emotions. In Lewis, M., & Haviland, J.M. (Eds.), *Handbook of emotions* (pp. 381–403). The Guilford Press.

Frijda, N.H., Mesquita, B., Sonnemans, J., & van Goozen, S. (1991). The duration of affective phenomena or emotions, sentiments and passions. In Strongman, K.T. (Ed.), *International review of studies on emotion: Vol. 1* (pp. 187–225). John Wiley & Sons.

Goldie, P. (2002). Emotions, feelings and intentionality. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences, 1*, 235–254. doi:10.1023/A:1021306500055.

Greco, M., & Stenner, P. (2017). From paradox to pattern shift: Conceptualising liminal hotspots and their affective dynamics. *Theory & Psychology, 27*(2), 147–166. doi:10.1177/0959354317693120.

Gregg, M., & Seigworth, G.J. (Eds.). (2010). *The affect theory reader.* Duke University Press.

Griffiths, P.E. (1997). *What emotions really are. The problem of psychological categories.* The University of Chicago Press.

Hanna, R., & Maiese, M. (2009). *Embodied minds in action.* Oxford University Press.

Heidegger, M. (1992). *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik* [fundamental concepts of metaphysics] (2nd ed.). Vittorio Klostermann.

Heidegger, M. (1993). *Sein und Zeit* [Being and time] (13th ed.). Niemeyer.

Hutto, D. D., & Myin, E. (2013). *Radicalizing enactivism: Basic minds without content.* The MIT Press.

Kenaan, H. (2017). Changing moods. *Philosophia, 45*, 1469–1479. doi:10.1007/s11406-017-9895-z.

Lazarus, R.S. (1991). *Emotion and adaptation.* Oxford University Press.

Lormand, E. (1985). Toward a theory of moods. *Philosophical Studies, 47*, 385–407. doi:10.1007/BF00355211.

Luomala, H., & Laaksonen, M. (2000). Contributions from mood research. *Psychology and Marketing, 17*(3), 195–233.

Maiese, M. (2014). How can emotions be both cognitive and bodily? *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences, 13*, 513–531. doi:10.1007/s11097-014-9373-z.

McGann, M., De Jaegher, H., & Di Paolo, E. (2013). Enaction and psychology. *Review of General Psychology, 17*(2), 203–209. doi:10.1037/a0032935.

Mitchell, J. (2019). The intentionality and intelligibility of moods. *European Journal of Philosophy, 27*(1), 118–135. doi:10.1111/ejop.12385.

Oatley, K., & Johnson-Laird, P.N. (1987). Towards a cognitive theory of emotions. *Cognition & Emotion, 1*, 29–50. doi:10.1080/02699938708408362.

Odling-Smee, J., Laland, K.N., & Feldman, M.W. (2003). *Niche construction: The neglected process in evolution.* Princeton University Press.

Parkinson, B., Totterdell, P., Briner, R.B., & Reynolds, S. (1996). *Changing moods: The psychology of mood and mood regulation.* Longman.

Pouw, W.T.J.L., & de Jong, H.L. (2015). Rethinking situated and embodied social psychology. *Theory & Psychology, 25*(4), 411–433. doi:10.1177/0959354315585661.

Ratcliffe, M. (2002). Heidegger's attunement and the neuropsychology of emotion. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences, 1*(3), 287–312. doi:10.1023/A:1021312100964.

Ratcliffe, M. (2005). The feeling of being. *Journal of Consciousness Studies, 12*(8–10), 43–60.

Ratcliffe, M. (2013). What is it to lose hope? *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences, 12*, 597–614. doi:10.1007/s11097-011-9215-1.

Ratcliffe, M. (2014). *Experiences of depression: A study in phenomenology.* Oxford University Press.

Russell, J.A. (1980). A circumplex model of affect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 39*, 1161–1178. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/h0077714.

Russell, J.A. (2003). Core affect and the psychological construction of emotion. *Emotion Review, 110*(1), 145–172. doi:10.1037/0033-295x.110.1.145.

Russell, J.A., & Barrett, L.F. (1999). Core affect, prototypical emotional episodes, and other things called *emotion*: Dissecting the elephant. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 76*(5), 805–819. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0022-3514.76.5.805.

Seigworth, G.J., & Gregg, M. (2010). An inventory of shimmers. In Gregg, M., & Seigworth, G.J. (Eds.), *The affect theory reader* (pp. 1–25). Duke University Press. 2010.

Siemer (2009). Mood experience: Implications of a dispositional theory of moods. *Emotion review, 1*(3), 256–263. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1754073909103594.

Simondon, G. (1992). The genesis of the individual. *Incorporations, 6*, 296–319.

Simondon, G. (2009). The position and the problem of ontogenesis. *Parrhesia, 7*, 4–16.

Simondon, G. (2011). On the mode of existence of technical objects. *Deleuze Studies, 5*(3), 407–424.

Simondon, G. (2020). *Individuation in light of notions of form and information.* University of Minnesota Press.

Sizer, L. (2000). Towards a computational theory of mood. *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, 51*, 743–769. doi:10.1093/bjps/51.4.743.

Slaby, J. (2015). Affectivity and temporality in Heidegger. In Ubiali, M., & Wehrle, M. (Eds.), *Feeling and value, willing and action. Phaenomenologica* (pp. 183–206). Springer. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-10326-6_11.

Slaby, J. (2017). More than a feeling: Affect as radical situatedness. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy, XLI*, 7–26.

Slaby, J. (2018a). Affective arrangements and disclosive postures: Towards a post-phenomenology of situated affectivity. URL: http://janslaby.com/downloads/slaby2017_-_affective_arrangements_and_disclosive_postures_web_vorab.pdf.

Slaby, J. (2018b). Disposedness/Befindlichkeit (in preparation). In Wrathall, M. (Ed.), *The Heidegger lexicon.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. URL: https://www.academia.edu/30256823/Disposedness_Befindlichkeit_Heidegger_Lexicon

Slaby, J., & von Scheve, C. (Eds.). (2019). *Affective societies. Key concepts.* Routledge.

Stenner, P. (2008). A. N. Whitehead and subjectivity. *Subjectivity, 22*, 90–109. doi:10.1057/sub.2008.4.

Stenner, P. (2017). *Liminality and experience: A transdisciplinary approach to the psychosocial.* Palgrave McMillan. doi:10.1057/978-1-137-27211-9.

Stenner, P., Greco, M., & Motzkau, J.F. (2017). Introduction to the special issue on liminal hotspots. *Theory & Psychology, 27*(2), 141–146. doi:10.1177/0959354316687867.

Sterelny, K. (2010). Minds: Extended or scaffolded? *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences, 9*, 465–481. doi:10.1007/s11097-010-9174-y.

Szakolczai, A. (2009). Liminality and experience: Structuring transitory situations and transformative events. *International Political Anthropology, 2*(1), 141–172.

Thomassen, B. (2014). *Liminality and the modern. Living through the in-between.* Ashgate.

Thompson, E. (2007). *Mind in life: Biology, phenomenology and the sciences of mind.* Belknap press of Harvard University press.

Thompson, E., & Zahavi, D. (2007). Philosophical issues: Continental phenomenology. In Zelazo, P.D., Moscovitch, M., & Thompson, E. (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of consciousness* (pp. 67–88). Cambridge University Press.

Watson, D., & Vaidya, J. (2003). Mood measurement: Current status and future directions. In Schinka, J.A., Velicer, W.F., & Weiner, I.B. (Eds.), *Handbook of psychology: Vol. 2* (pp. 351–375). John Wiley & Sons. Research methods in psychology.

Weichold, M. (2018). Situated agency: Towards an affordance-based, sensorimotor theory of action. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences, 17*, 761–785. doi:10.1007/s11097-017-9548-5.

Withy, K. (2015). Owned emotions: Affective excellence in Heidegger on Aristotle. In McManus, D. (Ed.), *Heidegger, authenticity and the self: Themes from division two of being and time* (pp. 21–36). Routledge.

Wrbouschek, M., & Slunecko, T. (2020). Tensed toward the collective: A Simondonian perspective on human experience in context. *Theory & Psychology*. doi:10.1177/0959354320943294.

Chapter 3) Liminal moods and sense-making under conditions of uncertainty

Authors

Markus Wrbouschek & Thomas Slunecko

Abstract

Researchers have begun to recognize the importance of intuition and strategies of affectively grounded sense-making, specifically in the context of late modern societies which are characterized by high degrees of uncertainty, risk and rapidly changing environments. In fact, affectivity has been considered one of the most central features of today´s permanently liminal forms of life. However, the roles of different varieties of affective experience have not yet been fully taken into consideration. Drawing from Gilbert Simondon´s theory of individuation, we here focus on moods specifically and develop a theoretical perspective on how moods functionally contribute to situated sense-making under conditions of uncertainty. We thereby hope to contribute to solving some of the problems psychologists keep having with mood experiences. At the same time, we think that our approach will prove fruitful for studying processes of sense-making in undecided and open (social) environments.

Keywords

Mood, affect, liminality, Simondon, sense-making

Introduction

Research has come to recognize the importance of in-between strategies of intuitive and affectively grounded sense-making for situated cognition and action. As a consequence, affective reasoning is no longer seen as irrational and inferior form of sense-making, but as perfectly reasonable and in many situations necessary strategy. In a review article, Zinn suggests "that instrumental rationality is only one decision-making strategy amongst others and is not necessarily dominant or superior" (Zinn, 2016, p. 348). He argues that "[f]or a number of reasons […] people would complement or supplant rationality with other in-between strategies such as trust, intuition and emotion utilising sources of so-called tacit or

experiential knowledge" (Zinn, 2016, p. 348, emphasis in the original). In trying to understand how actors make sense of what is going on in their everyday environments and develop practical orientations for dealing with the challenges of the everyday, Horlick-Jones, Walls & Kitzinger (2007) thus conclude that one should no longer follow a normative distinction between so called rational and supposedly irrational strategies of decision- and sense-making but that one should attempt to describe the "bricolage of everyday reasoning" (Zinn, 2016, p. 349). With the term "bricolage" they refer to collective and dynamic processes of reasoning which involve a wide range of strategies that cannot be neatly separated into rational=functional versus irrational=dysfunctional categories.

Within a wider, socio-historical framework, many theorists of modernization (Beck, 1992; Beck, Giddens, & Lash, 1994; Rosa, 2013) have also been emphasizing the importance of undecidedness, insecurity and risk not only as important aspects of personal and collective decision-making, but as structural features of contemporary (Western) societies. In light of these socio-historical diagnosis of contemporary forms of life, Zinn argues that if these theorists are "correct regarding a general societal change towards a risk society or risk culture, in-between strategies are more important when expert knowledge is fundamental but contested in dealing with future challenges. In late or reflexive modernity people are increasingly exposed to fateful decision-making in everyday life with neither sufficient time nor available knowledge" (Zinn, 2016, p. 349, emphasis in the original). There has been an ongoing debate in the context of modernization theory concerning the question of potentially destructive consequences of social environments that expose actors to high degrees of uncertainty and risk. In his theory of acceleration, for instance, Rosa (2013) discusses the erosion of normatively binding frameworks that can provide orientation for actors in their everyday lives and attests contemporary, highly accelerated societies an increased potential for alienation. Twenty years before, Beck (1992) argued that while risk societies provide actors with unprecedented options for choosing their own fate, the lack of structural securities as well as normative orientations tends to overstrain actors' capacities for dealing with the undecidedness of late modern life. Thus, stress, depression and practical disorientation would be the inevitable consequence of a structural indeterminateness at the peak of late modernity.

While such theoretical perspectives on modernization provide convincing arguments for analysing macro-level socio-historical developments and processes, they cannot provide theoretical, let alone empirical insight in how actors in today´s society deal with risk and uncertainty on a day-to-day basis. Rosa hints at various possibilities for experientially dealing with accelerated life at points in his work (Rosa, 2013, pp. 224-250), however, this is still a desideratum for further research.

From a risk-research perspective, Horlick-Jones (2005) and Horlick-Jones, Walls & Kitzinger (2007) have been developing a general framework for studying the different strategies that actors might use in coming to terms with ever changing and uncertain environments. They emphasize that the use of different strategies should be studied contextually, i.e., in relation to changing conditions and situations which enable different modes of reasoning and sense-making. Concrete decisions would then be reached processually, involving the aforementioned "bricolage" of strategies and always relationally embedded in a specific situational configuration, which has to be taken into consideration when trying to understand, how actors come to deal with their world. While generally agreeing with Horlick-Jones, Walls & Kitzinger (2007), Zinn (2016) criticizes that the authors do not fully take into account the role of affectivity (emotions, moods, intuitions, etc.) in this process (Zinn, 2016, p. 349). In his own contribution, he consequently focuses on the role of emotion and intuition in open processes of sense-making. This is relevant not only from the perspective of the contemporary turn to affect in the social sciences (Gregg, & Seigworth, 2010), but also in light of the importance that is ascribed to affective phenomena in the context of modernization theory (see for instance, Rosa, 2013, p. 224-250). In this paper, we focus on an aspect that has not been covered in detail by Zinn, namely the distinction between different varieties of affectivity that have been discussed in psychology (Armon-Jones, 1991, Davidson, 1994, Frijda, 1993, Russell, & Barrett, 1999) and how these differences between affective experiences pertain to situated sense-making and uncertainty. We focus specifically on one set of affective phenomena, which have proven conceptually challenging in the psychological literature: Moods have been described as a functionally and phenomenologically distinct form of affect (Frijda, 1993, Parkinson, Totterdell, Briner, & Reynolds, 1996); however, re-

searchers have not yet been able to come to a conclusion on how to interpret the specific features of moods. We argue that - in contrast to emotions, emotional episodes, sentiments, and other shades of affectivity - the distinct features of moods relate to their specific functional role in the context of sense-making and relational orientation toward (undecided) situations. We find preliminary evidence in recent experimental results which link moods to uncertainty and the undecidedness of a situation (Eldar, Rutledge, Dolan, & Niv, 2015, Raoult, Moser, & Gygax, 2017). The latter find experimental evidence for mood as a "cumulative expectation mismatch". However, both approaches pay little attention to the conceptual problems that psychologists have been having with moods. These problems concern two distinct (but ultimately interrelated) features of moods. One is the intentional structure of moods, the other is their peculiar phenomenal character. Both originate in the fact that we experience moods different from targeted emotions. As Frijda (1993) describes, emotions are usually short-term, targeted affective responses to more or less specific events or objects we encounter. In contrast, moods usually evolve over longer periods of time while lacking a specific target. Thus, respondents often describe their current mood state as being about nothing (in particular) or everything, the whole world, or the like. Mitchell discusses the problematic of mood-intentionality in an informative paper (2019) and based on his critique of existing approaches, we argue that moods are not about a situation already decided, but about a process of becoming situated. In our approach, we build on Simondon´s concept of the 'affectivo-emotive' which links affectivity to open processes of individuation and - within these - specifically to the persistence of preindividual potentials which have not yet been incorporated in a stable relation between a subject and its associated milieu.

In this paper, we argue that moods - understood as liminal affective processes - are indeed highly relevant for understanding liminal practices of sense-making and action. We furthermore argue that moods are part of pre-reflexive experiences which oscillate between a passive receptive pole and an active-emotive pole. While the former constitutes an awareness of conflicting potentials for becoming situated (the preindividual in Simondon), the latter pole expresses an orientation toward the resolution of preindividual ambivalence through the actualization of a temporarily stable relation between subject and environment. The occurrent phe-

nomenal profile (the experienced mood "state") can consequently be understood as an embodied, evaluative feeling of how one is doing in the process of becoming individual.

In building our argument, we move as follows: in the first section, we set the stage by arguing, how liminality and uncertainty are in fact increasingly relevant features of contemporary (Western) societies. Against the backdrop of this broad social-theoretical framework, we turn to recent approaches to sense-making under conditions of uncertainty and risk and the role that affectivity plays in processes of coming to terms with undecided situations. Specifically, we discuss Raoult et al.`s (2017) theory of mood as cumulative expectation mismatch and show, that while their approach is interesting for its recognition of the intrinsic connection between mood as a processual phenomenon and contexts of uncertainty, they do not fully take into account the complexity of mood experiences. In the following section, we revisit the conceptual problematic of mood experiences and present our own approach. In doing so, we make use of Simondon´s concept of an 'affective-emotive' and discuss its role within the theory of individuation as presented by Simondon.

In the last section we return to the question of liminal decision-making by showing, how a Simondonian concept of moods as transitory experiences of becoming (individual) might be used as a conceptual lens for studying liminal practices and experiences. Concluding our paper, we propose some lines for further research as well as potentially rewarding fields of application.

1. Liminality and uncertainty in late modernity

For some time, modernization has been understood through a paradigm of bureaucratic rationalisation (Weber, 1978). Following this paradigm, modernity is to be characterised by a high degree of rational planning, organisation and bureaucratization in different spheres of society. In dealing with the rigid normative demands and rules of such a situation, expert cultures would develop as (relatively small) classes of experts would be equipped and educated to make informed decisions based on the intelligible evidence gathered from a transparent social structure. At the same time, a (comparatively large) number of lay persons would be excluded from rational decision-making processes, simply because their prac-

tices of sense-making would be ill equipped to deal with an overflow of information. Within this paradigm, decision-making itself is regarded as either rational (based on an intelligible organization of society) or irrational. Irrationality here would mean that agents would simply not possess the information or problem-solving capacity for dealing with an (in principle) transparent socio-structural apparatus. Thus, lay person´s attempts at sense-making would be strictly inferior to those of experts.

This paradigm of rationalisation has been criticised by social theorists like Beck (1992), Beck, Giddens, & Lash (1994), Bauman (2012) and Rosa (2013). Despite the conceptual differences between their respective approaches, all these authors share the conviction that late modernity is no longer to be characterised as becoming increasingly homogenous, structurally coherent and rational, but that societies are becoming more and more complex, ambivalent and structurally open to situations of indeterminacy, risk and uncertainty. This is reflected in theoretical labels like 'risk society' (Beck, 1992), 'reflexive modernity' (Beck, Giddens, & Lash, 1994), or 'liquid modernity' (Bauman, 2012).

With regard to agent´s practices of sense-making, Thomassen (2014) has been arguing that late modern societies force actors into processes of permanent liminality. Using a concept that has originally been developed in the context of ritual theory by van Gennep (2019) and later Turner (1969) and that is being deployed by Sczakolczai (2009, 2017), Greco & Stenner (Greco & Stenner, 2017, Stenner, 2017), liminality refers to a phase of transition between (relatively) stable social arrangements and subject positions. Traditional examples for liminal transitions would be the passage from childhood to adulthood, or from bachelor*ette to married person. While these examples would indicate a primacy of social status positions and a merely intermediary role of liminal phases, Thomassen (2014) as well as Greco & Stenner (2017) argue that under late modern conditions, liminality is becoming more and more predominant throughout the life span of the individual but also groups and social communities. For instance, contemporary professional careers are no longer defined by an occupational profile, let alone one´s affiliation with one company, but by a succession of project-like (in plural!), more or less extended phases of reorientation, training and searching for the next opportunity.

Thus, liminal transitions from one job/training setting to the next are becoming increasingly important, while phases of relative stability tend to be experienced as resting points on a tumultuous path (Ibarra & Obodaru, 2016).

From this the question arises, what allows agents to deal with the increasingly liminal aspects of life? After all, the demands on agent´s cognitive, affective, and practical abilities should be expected to differ in a situation of liminality, uncertainty and ambivalence as compared to one of relatively stable normative guidelines and structural determination. There have been different attempts to distil structural features of liminal experiences on a macro-level. Rosa for instance discusses structural determinants of experiences of alienation, but also typical figures of self-world orientations such as 'the drift' and 'the surfer' which would allow actors to find at least minimal orientation while skilfully navigating a constantly moving stream of experiences and circumstances (Rosa, 2013, pp. 224-250). Some of the difficulties social scientists keep having with contemporary forms of liminal experience might have to do with a tendency that Virno (2004) criticizes in modernization theory, namely to approach the openness of contemporary forms of life through contrasting them with the normative stability of pre-modern society. In such a perspective, openness and liminality are often seen primarily through a lens of loss (the loss of orientation, certainty, security, etc.). Apart from the problem that such a perspective risks misrepresenting both pre-modern and contemporary self-world relations (think, for instance, of the presumed "security" of the early modern family and the so called erosion of family values), Virno argues that any attempt at understanding contemporary forms of life based on a conceptual framework suited to previous social forms, must inevitably miss the novel aspects of today´s experience. Virno thus urges to give up not only on certain conceptual tools but on the whole framework of modernization as a meta-narrative for understanding contemporary life. In his own attempt, he focuses on the affective dynamics of (collective) experience in societies after modernization thus pointing toward the importance of non-rational modes of sense-making. Similarly, Paul Stenner has been emphasizing the importance of pre-reflexive, embodied and affectively grounded experience in today´s liminal environment (Stenner, 2017). In Stenner´s work, the affective dynamics of experience is embedded in a process theoretical framework based on the work of Whitehead (1985) and Langer

(1948). In Whitehead´s terms, non-rational, imaginative and affective forms of sense-making are not to be seen as alternatives to reflexive reasoning and conceptual comprehension, but as aspects of processually unfolding encounters with the world, where any act of cognition (as well as motivation, action, etc.) presupposes a pre-reflexive encounter with the world, a prehension of meaning which is based on an affective coupling. At the same time, just as cognition processually presupposes pre-reflexive sense-feeling, conceptual comprehension enables new possibilities for future encounters with the world in an ongoing, relational process.

This focus on different modes of sense-making as part of a primordial entanglement between an affectively concerned agent and her environment brings us full circle to Horlick-Jones, Walls, & Kitzinger's (2007) bricolage concept of sense-making. Their point of departure is mirroring the above mentioned distinction in the context of bureaucratic expert cultures. The traditional stance was to equate expert knowledge with rationality, while treating lay person´s knowledge as synonymous with irrationality. Horlick-Jones, Walls, & Kitzinger (2007) have argued that this picture is inadequate under conditions of increasing structural undecidedness in contemporary societies for a variety of reasons. In short, neither is it useful to think of lay people´s strategies of sense-making as simply irrational and thus inferior, nor do experts rely on purely rational considerations when deciding about uncertain outcomes. Thus, Horlick-Jones (2005) concludes that "the diversity of risk-related reasoning practices [involving a strategic coupling of expert and lay practices and experiences, comment by the authors] needs to be recognized as an important topic for investigation in its own right" (Horlick-Jones, 2005, p. 254, emphasis in the original). To this end, Horlick-Jones, Walls, & Kitzinger (2007) have been developing a categorial schema for analysing different sense-making strategies on a collective level, which involve experts and lay persons in their shared struggle for making sense under uncertain and ever changing environmental conditions. While their work provides an important starting point for researchers interested in how we practically deal with risk and uncertainty in everyday situations, it has been noted by Zinn (2016) that this approach by and large ignores the important role of affectivity (e. g. emotions, feelings, etc.) processes of sense-making.

Zinn (2008, 2016) discusses the potential contribution of emotions to decision-making at some length, referring to psychologists having found a growing number of emotion categories that correlate with different aspects of decision-making (Zinn, 2016, p. 353-356). He mentions basic psychological emotion categories such as anger, shame, and disgust; however, on a conceptual level there are issues with relying on manifest (i.e. verbalized) emotion categories when dealing with decision-making processes under conditions of uncertainty. For instance, the distinct affective evaluation of undecided situations is often not (yet) transparent to agents living through them, which raises questions about the reliability of self-report data. This is specifically the case, when respondents are asked to choose from a list of pre-defined emotion categories to describe their affective state. In open response formats, respondents tentatively explore different descriptions of how they are feeling and these descriptions do not always fit neatly into traditional emotion categories. While Zinn refers to canonical psychological emotion categories, he also includes hope, faith and belief in his triangular model of decision-making strategies under conditions of risk (Zinn, 2016, pp. 356-359). It is unclear, whether these should be considered emotions in the same sense as the aforementioned anger, shame, etc. Zinn´s overall aim is to argue, that different aspects of affectivity are indeed relevant (and necessary) for understanding sense-making and decision-making; however, he does not specify, whether different emotions (or different classes of affective experiences) might have different functional roles with regard to an actor´s overall orientation in an uncertain environment. From a phenomenological perspective, the functional role of hope for instance, has been discussed by Ratcliffe in the context of his concept of 'existential feelings' which he regards to occupy a distinct position in the experiential field of an agent (Ratcliffe, 2013). Existential feelings are thus ontologically fundamental modes of encountering the world. Drawing from Heidegger (1993), Ratcliffe (2002, 2005) argues that any intentional directedness toward occurrent situations in one´s life already presupposes a fundamental feeling of connectedness. Certain clinical syndromes, such as depression (Ratcliffe, 2010, 2013) show the importance of a fundamental sense of being-in-the-world. At the same time, Ratcliffe makes it clear, that the function of this kind of fundamental affective attunement to the 'world' in its most general sense is distinctly different from emo-

tions targeting specific events or objects encountered within the already established horizon of a life-world. With regard to Stenner´s (2017) relational perspective, existential feelings would much rather pertain to a most basic level of affective concern (thus grounding any specific practice of sense-making in a primordial feeling of belonging) than to any specific act of comprehension. Consequently, a social-psychological understanding of the interrelations between different affective experiences and processes of sense-making and action must take the conceptual differences between these varieties of affect into account. We intend to contribute to such a conceptual differentiation by taking the particular distinction between emotions (such as fear, anger, disgust, and the like, to which Zinn refers) and moods (Frijda, 1993) as a starting point in the following section. We will then show that moods are indeed a distinct and functionally important aspect of liminal practices of sense-making.

2. Emotion, mood and sense-making under conditions of uncertainty

Various psychological theories of emotion and specifically cognitivistic approaches that situate affectivity within a general theory of sense-making (Oatley & Johnson-Laird, 2014, Scherer, 2005) describe emotions as targeted responses to identifiable objects or events that one encounters. As such, emotions are typically characterised by a combination of an antecedent (the event triggering the emotion), a distinct experiential quality (how the triggering event is experienced through the emotion), and a motivational tendency associated with the emotion so felt (an orientation toward the stimulus-event, often in the form of an action motivation). A classic example for an emotion would therefore be that I experience fear upon facing a large, black dog, baring its teeth at me. There has been an ongoing debate on the question, whether emotions rest on a conceptual comprehension of the stimulus event in the sense of a propositional judgment about the object encountered. Some argue that an emotional evaluation of an event can (in principle) be formulated propositionally, as in the sentence "This dog is frightening". Others argue that emotions do not rely on a propositional structure. Helm (2002), e.g., regards emotions to be felt evaluations, that is, immediate bodily feelings that provide a pre-reflexive sense of how we relate toward a situation. For our general line of argument, however, the question whether emotions require reflexivity or merely involve a bodily felt qualification of an event is second-

ary. In both cases, emotions are thought as intentionally directed at specific objects in one´s experiential field and in both cases emotions are typically experienced as immediately following the occurrence of the object. Usually, the emotional response is conceived of as ebbing off soon after the affective event. In this regard, Frijda (1993), for instance, refers to the distinction between an initial emotional response and potential longer lasting residual effects of an emotionally relevant event. Such after effects would occur only, if the initial emotion exceeds a certain intensity (and thus cannot be dealt with in time), or if the original emotion eliciting event is reinforced by consecutive stimuli. One can see that the experiential quality of an emotion proper is directly determined by the evaluative import of the triggering event.

Thus, the intentional relation between the agent and the emotion eliciting event is crucial for understanding the emotional experience, both content-wise and with regard to phenomenological quality. In both regards, mood experiences differ considerably from emotional responses like the one in the dog-example. First, moods seem to lack an intentional directedness at specific events or objects. As we mentioned in the introduction, respondents often describe their moods to be about everything, nothing in particular, or even anything and nothing. Even if one were to be able to point out features of one´s situation that seem subjectively relevant for the mood experience, this connection is usually rather loose and prone to shifts over time.[1] The apparent lack of intentional directedness of moods has been interpreted differently in the psychological literature. Mitchell (2019) discusses these options and finally proposes to conceive of moods as being intentional after all, but in the specific sense of providing a global assessment of one´s overall relation to the world. We will return to this point below. For now, it is important to note that in contrast to emotions, moods lack an immediate and identifiable orientation toward an object or event. Thus, their contribution to processes

---

[1] We cannot discuss this in detail here, but consider being at a particularly lively party feeling cheered up and adventurous. In such a situation you might be tempted to point at different features of the situation in succession: that the music is particularly enjoyable, the snacks and drinks taste delicious and the conversations are spirited. Still, you would most likely not be able to point at one particular aspect of the situation being responsible for your mood. And it might even occur to you that the same music has failed to impress you that much on other occasions, that you usually don´t care so much for this particular drink, etc.. All of this raises the question, whether your specific experience of situational features is really the reason for your cheeriness, or whether, in contrast, it is your mood state that colours the situation in an unusually bright tone.

of sense-making cannot be that of an affective judgement or felt evaluation of any particular object, but must be sought in a more general form of sense-making. The second discerning feature of moods is their particular phenomenal quality, that is, the way they are felt and experienced by actors. This differentiating criterion is mentioned frequently in the literature, however, its discussion is mostly restricted to moods extending for longer periods of time and generally being experienced as low intensity affective states that often linger on the edges of consciousness instead of being dominant in one´s experience of what is going on. Frijda (1993) considers some of the relevant empirical evidence, coming to the conclusion that moods are best characterised as global and diffuse affective states which affect the way one thinks, feels, acts and perceives the world in an encompassing sense. It has been precisely the globality of mood experiences that has led researchers from the phenomenological tradition to describe mood as affective attunement which shapes the whole field of experience in accordance with its particular affective profile (Elpidorou & Freeman, 2015, Freeman, 2014). Following Martin Heidegger (1993), phenomenologists have employed a categorical distinction between occurrent moods – i.e., everyday instances of consciously felt mood – and fundamental moods as experiential frameworks that need not manifest themselves consciously but provide a most basic tonality for all of an agent´s experiences of and practical orientations toward the world (Elpidorou & Freeman, 2015, Slaby, 2017).

For our ensuing argument, one other aspect of the experience of moods is of specific importance: Moods are prone to shifts and (often quite sudden) changes. This is evidenced by everyday language ("mood swings", being "moody", etc.) as well as first-person accounts of moods. Nevertheless, the oscillating and ephemeral character of moods has been relegated to a side consideration in most of the literature. When considered at all, these oscillations have been discussed either in the context of the rhythms of physiological affect (which we would distinguish from the phenomenally rich experience of mood proper), or in the context of mood regulation (Parkinson, Totterdell, Briner, & Reynolds, 1996). As an exception, Kenaan (2017) recently suggested to think of moods as experiences that are intrinsically open to change. With regard to first-person experiences of mood, Kenaan provides the following highly insightful assessment:

> Our moods are commonly experienced within a horizon of a future change and against the background of the mood-changes we have already undergone. As such, the experience of moods typically involves inbuilt dimensions of plurality and relationality. The mood we're in is always one option among others, always related to other moods (our own moods but also, of course, the moods of others). And, thus, even in times in which we feel captivated by a mood and find it difficult to envision the possibility of a mood change, the option of change is nevertheless structurally part of the horizons of our being in any given mood. (Kenaan, 2017, p. 1474)

Understood this way, the experience of moods opens up our field of experience to alterity and change. In Kenaan´s view, it is a crucial aspect of the way we experience moods that they refer us to alternate potential ways of encountering the world as well as to past and (potential) future affective encounters. Thus, moods themselves involve a sense of difference, rather than pertaining to a specific static situation we are in at a certain moment in time. This is why Kenaan arrives at the conclusion that it might be necessary to give up on the idea that moods are "static self-sufficient and self-enclosed consecutive states" (Kenaan, 2017, p. 1478) at all. Instead, moods should be considered as part of a holistic "transmutation" (Kenaan, 2017, p. 1478) of the actor's way of being. The changing of moods would correlate to changes in one´s overall attunement to the world. An interesting question in this context regards the intentional status of changing moods. We have seen in our above discussion of mood-intentionality that Mitchell tries to solve problems of previous mood theories by arguing that moods have whole-world intentionality (Mitchell, 2019, p. 123). In his view, moods are directed at the whole of an agent´s (current) environment, presenting it in a specific evaluative light. Thus understood, moods would provide felt evaluations that would be directed not at specific events or occurrences within a given field of experience, but at the field of experience as such. As Mitchell puts it, they would be intentionally directed at "one's total environment, understood as encompassing the broadest set of relations (and potential relations) between self and world, and so as necessarily open-ended" (Mitchell, 2019, p. 124). In light of Kenaan´s theory, what is of particular importance in this quote is the reference to the inherently open ended nature of mood´s intentional object. In this regard, mood´s oscillations reflect dynamic changes in the overall relation between an agent and this

broad horizon of experience. Thus, the changing of moods would refer to the fact that we ourselves are not fixed in our experiential relation to the world, but constantly on the verge of changing, developing new relational orientations toward our environment. Regarding the general topic of this paper, moods could then be understood as an affective barometer of change, thus assuming a functional role in the context of liminal experiences, by presenting (through their inherent changeability) the processual dynamics of going through liminal experiences as they happen.

However, we like to propose a slightly different interpretation of mood´s changeability. For Mitchell, what is presented in the specific mood experience is a specific dynamic configuration which involves an agent in her relation to her total environment. The evaluative apperception of the mood experience is thus directed at a specific way the world is. In the following section, we alternatively suggest that moods, while indeed being directed at the totality of one´s relation toward the world, are so not by warrant of evaluating a given set of (manifest) relations between agent and total environment, but by warrant of evaluating a discrepancy between the manifest and the potential within self-world relations. In order to make this claim plausible, we draw from Simondon´s theory of individuation and specifically from his concept of the preindividual (Simondon, 1992, 2007, 2020).

3. A Simondonian perspective on mood as transitory affective process

Recently, Raoult, Moser, & Gygax (2017, p. 1) have argued that moods might be about a "cumulative expectation mismatch" between a manifest outcome in a decision situation and what agents expected the outcome to be. They argue that moods are prevalent in situations, where an agent´s estimation of potential outcomes differs from the outcome of a decision. In a similar way, Eldar, Rutledge, Dolan, & Niv (2015) discuss moods as representations of momentum, arguing that moods are not so much directed at a particular state of affairs, but at the dynamics of discrepancies between expectations and subsequent decision outcomes in an ongoing sequence. In such cases, respondent´s affective experience would be determined not only by the surprise of an unexpected outcome as such, but by how the discrepancy between estimations of potential outcomes and actual outcomes would develop over a series of situations. In both cases, moods

seem to be linked to the in-between of situations and provide an affective record of the gap that opens between them. Though this is beyond the theoretical scope of the authors, we hold that these studies – despite their methodological focus on quite narrow decision situations – can be interpreted as indicating the relevance of a discrepancy between the actualization of an event and potential alternatives for the experience of moods. Thus, the evaluative apperception of mood would not only be directed at the total relations between an actor and her current environment, but also about a relation between a potential relational configuration and the way it actually manifests in time. The intentionality of moods would then have to account for two theoretically distinct meanings of the term relation. On the one hand, it would have to account for the relation established between the experiencing agent and her total environment (this would be Mitchell´s position). On the other hand, the term relation would also refer to a relation between potential and actual in the sense that the whole of one´s relation toward the environment as currently actualized would be evaluated in light of potential sets of relations toward the same environment. What the specific experience of mood would then present in an evaluative light would be a discrepancy between these two sets of relations in a processually unfolding sequence. In the following subsections, we turn to the work of Simondon in order to present a theoretical background for this complex idea.

3.1. Into the unknown – life as open process of individuation

Our interpretation of the research presented at the start of this section has led us to consider a peculiar double intentionality of moods, which is founded on the two meanings of the term relation – one time referring to a relation between actor and environment and one time referring to the whole of this relation as such being situated in a processual relation between potentiality and actualization. Our main source of inspiration for this comes from Simondon´s work on individuation, which is just now becoming more widely recognized in psychology (Wrbouschek, & Slunecko, 2020) and the social sciences (Combes, 2013, De Boever, Murray, Roffe, & Woodward, 2012). Better known for his work on the philosophy of technology (Simondon, 2011), Simondon spent much of his career developing a conceptual framework for studying ontogenesis (Simondon, 2009), i.e., the unfolding of individual and collective life. For Simondon, life unfolds through an open pro-

cess of individuation. Thus, the processual emergence of novel relations between the living being and its associated milieu should be considered primordial to any notion of the individual as a self-enclosed entity or being. Conversely, Simondon aims to understand "the individual from the perspective of the process of individuation rather than the process of individuation by means of the individual" (Simondon, 1992, p. 300). While Simondon´s philosophical project is aimed at developing a conceptual framework that would allow the study of individuation in living beings in general, we limit ourselves to human beings and specifically to what Simondon calls psychic (and collective) individuation (Simondon, 2007).

Simondon´s key concept is the preindividual (or: preindividual reality). In order to avoid founding individuation on the idea of a pre-formed substance or deriving it from a first principle beyond the process of individuation itself, he draws from thermodynamics and posits that individuation is driven by a charge of potential energy which is borne by living beings throughout each cycle of their ontogenesis. Preindividual reality is defined by Simondon as a situation of tension within a system at the limit of becoming structurally determined (Simondon, 2007, pp. 14-16). It is the fundamental mark of life that it always contains an excess of potential which allows it to develop beyond its current state but which at the same time destabilizes the formation of a stable relation between the living individual and its environment. A preindividual situation is marked by the simultaneous existence of a multiplicity of potential trajectories for becoming individual. As the realization of certain potentials is always at odds with realizing others, preindividual reality is highly unstable as the conflicting potentials endanger the integrity of the system as a whole. Thus, a resolution of the conflicting tensions within the system has to be brought forth. The process through which this is achieved, is called individuation by Simondon. Regarding Simondon's use of the notion of potentiality, note that he regards preindividual reality as a reality of the living being as much as is its current manifest relation toward self and world. Thus, the potential is not only abstractly possible in the way that a retrospective reconstruction of alternate realities ("what else could have been") would be, but constitutes a real problematic borne by the living being throughout its life course. Put this way, Simondon´s theory of individuation is one of a constant problematization of the living being by an inherent aspect of its own existence (Simondon, 1992, p. 306-307).

For psychologists, it is important that talking about the preindividual as real potential instead of abstract potential implies conceiving of preindividual reality as experientially and practically transparent. Thus, the relation between one´s multiple potential trajectories of becoming and one´s current relations toward the environment has to be considered in any conceptualization of psychic activities, mental acts, etc. This becomes even clearer, once one factors in that – according to Simondon – individuation cannot be conceptualized as a once- and-for-all settling of preindividual tension. Rather, the preindividual – as the dynamic force within life – persists throughout each cycle of individuation and is re-articulated in each emerging relation between individual and milieu. Different stages of life are distinguished by Simondon according to their specific mode of resolving this continuous tension between individual and milieu on the one side and another relation that the whole individual-milieu relation bears toward the preindividual. For human beings, the psyche represents "the continuing effort of individuation in a being that has to resolve its own problematic through its own involvement as an element of the problem by taking action as a subject" (Simondon, 1992, p. 305). Thus, psychic reality is not an end to itself, but a mode of resolution of the preindividual problematic and thus part of the process of ontogenesis. As a consequence, all that we are used to call mental activity has to be conceptualized with reference to the primordial problematic of structurally incorporating the human being´s relation to the preindividual as well as to its environment.

Individuation is always at the same time the individuation of the living being and the individuation of an environment relative to the current phase of the living. Thus, an individual always emerges relative to an associated milieu, which in the case of human life is a physical as well as a social world. The whole operation of individuation in Simondon is stretched between two inseparable relations. On the one hand, individuation always unfolds through establishing a relation between the individuating individual and an environment toward which it is orientationally positioned. On the other hand, this relational situation is marked by the persistence of a discrepancy between an excess of potential reality and what is actualized within the momentary self-world relation.

Simondon´s meta-psychological contribution is to show that the process of becoming a (human) individual – which is co-extensive with (human) life itself – unfolds relationally. 'Relationally' here refers at the same time to the relation of the human being toward its environment and to a relation between the actualized individual and the preindividual. The specific problem in thinking the human condition, according to Simondon, lies in understanding, how individuation is accomplished by human beings. To this end, Simondon introduces the dual concept of psychic and collective individuation. Human beings individuate not by establishing an exterior relation between individual and milieu, but through an internalization of the whole problematic of living. Thus, what psychologists often take for granted – the existence of a psychic apparatus or mental realm which encloses a subject´s relation to a world of objects as well as its inter-personal and social relations – is understood by Simondon as a specific resolution to a wider problematic of living organisms. Without being able to unpack all the consequences and complex implications of this processual understanding of psychic reality here, what is important for our aim is that for Simondon the whole purpose of the psychological is to resolve a tension that is prior to the individual as yet individuated. At this point, we can begin to see that, for Simondon, sense-making (like any other form of psychic activity) is a liminal enterprise not merely by way of happening under uncertain external circumstances (lack of information, changing environments, etc.), but because its very purpose is to come to terms with the fundamentally open make-up of the human condition. It is there, because we bear a preindividual charge that we are constantly trying to incorporate into feasible experiential relations toward ourselves and our social and physical environment. Simondon´s meta-psychology offers a process theoretical and relational perspective on liminality as a fundamental aspect of human life. Based on this general outlook and with specific regard to the dual relation of a subject toward an environment and preindividual reality, we now turn to the topic of affective sense-making and the role that moods play in the process of individuation.

3.2. Problematizing life – Affectivity and the experiential persistence of the preindividual

In the last subsection, we have seen that, for Simondon, an individual´s relation toward its associated milieu is as much experientially transparent as is its relation

toward which, in this relation, persists as preindividual, unresolved potential. There is a certain risk for misconception in speaking of a relation of 'an individual toward the preindividual' here, as the whole point of Simondon´s theory is to think individuation from a point of departure prior to a given individual. Consequently, what Simondon expresses by speaking of a persistence of preindividual reality in every stage of individuation is the idea that an individual is "simultaneously more and less than a unity" (Simondon, 1992, p. 306). As such, it "possesses an internal problematic and is capable of being an element in a problematic that has a wider scope than itself" (Simondon, 1992, p. 306). Consequently, Simondon has to explain how the problematic inherent in any phase of an individuals' becoming factors into a concept of experience. Simondon´s theory of affectivity is thus situated within the wider problematic of explaining, how subjective experience pertains to an aspect of existence which by definition exceeds the individuated relation between a subject and an object world (Simondon, 2007, pp. 97-123). Conceptual knowledge, propositional comprehension and reasoning cannot account for this aspect of reality as they already presuppose categorical distinctions rooted in a structurally determined relation. Rather, Simondon proposes that experience can account for preindividual reality because it is rooted in an affective relation which he calls the affective-emotive subconscious ("subconscience affective-émotive", Simondon, 1992, pp. 98-99). Experience through the affective-emotive has to be situated prior to verbalization, conceptual distinctions, etc., for it is movement from preindividuality and toward individuated being. It is about a pre-reflexive orientation toward the discovery of a potential level of compatibility between individual and milieu. One can see, how Simondon attempts to circumvent a conception of experience which already presupposes the extablished individual-milieu relation. Experience is fundamentally orientation, yet an orientation which is ontologically prior to the constitution of a subject-object relation. The double term 'affective-emotive' indicates that affective experience encompasses the passage from apprehending preindividual tensions (the affective) to an active-(emotive) orientation toward the potential resolution of these tensions in a (future) movement of individuation. This makes Simondon´s theory of affectivity so distinctly different in scope from a psychological theory of emotions: in Simondon´s sense affectivity is not about a specific object or state of affairs in the environmental field of an agent, but about a fundamental problematization of an individu-

al´s current being in light of a preindividual charge borne by it. This becomes clear in Simondon´s interpretation of the psychological categories of pleasure and pain:

> In general, one interprets pleasure and pain as signifying that a favourable or disfavourable event suddenly occurs in life and affects being: in fact, it is not on the level of the perfectly individuated being that such signification exists; maybe there exists a pleasure and a pain purely somatic; but the affectivo-emotive modes also have a significance within the accomplishment of the relation between the preindividual and the individual. The positive affective states indicate the synergy of the constituted individuation and the movement of the actual individuation from the preindividual; the negative affective states are states of conflict between these two domains of the subject.[2] (Simondon, 2007, p. 106)

Here, Simondon does not situate affectivity outside or beyond one´s everyday experience of events and the awareness of somatic feeling states; however, in light of such events, the affective experience is about a much wider problematic, one that is preindividual to any event-based evaluation. From a functional standpoint, and referring to Helm´s concept of emotions as felt evaluations, then the affective-emotive subconscious is not about evaluating a specific set of relations as yet established, but about apprehending a specific momentum in a subject's process of becoming, relative to its preindividual problematic.

4. Liminal moods and open process of becoming

In this final section we return to the topic of moods and their relevance for situated sense-making under conditions of uncertainty, ambivalence and risk. To this aim, we now examine how a Simondonian perspective on individuation, the preindividual, and affectivity can be applied to understanding moods. As we have seen, Simondon himself is interested in affectivity primarily in the context of explaining, how a subject can become pre-reflexively aware of a preindividual aspect of its existence, that is, of a dynamic potentiality which by definition exceeds

---

[2] The original quote reads: "On interprète en general le Plaisir et la douleur comme significant qu´un événement favorable ou défaforable pour la vie surgit et affecte l´être: en fait, ce n´est pas au niveau de l´être individué pur que cette signification existe; il existe peut-être un plaisir et une douleur purement somatiques; mais les modes affective-émotifs ont aussi une signification dans l´accomplissement de la relation entre le pré-individuel et l´individuel: les états affectifs positifs indiquent la synergie de l´individuation actuell du pré-individuel; les états affectifs négatifs sont des états de conflit entre ces deux domaines du sujet" (Simondon, 2007, p. 106).

categorization and rational comprehension. Thus, his aim is not to account for specific distinctions and phenomenological variations in our everyday experience of emotions, sentiments, feelings, or moods. From a psychological perspective, one might ask, whether the 'functionality' that Simondon associates with his concept of an affective-emotive subconscious applies to all forms of affective experience. In our reading of Simondon, this is not necessarily the case. We suggest to distinguish between different variations of affective experience which serve distinct 'purposes' based on their relation to individuation and preindividual reality. A psychological taxonomy of affective experiences could take into account the specific relational makeup of a psychosocial individual relative to its environment as well as to preindividual reality. For instance, there are spontaneous affective responses to specific stimuli in the environment, which seem to be sufficiently intelligible within the context of an established subject-environment relation. This would be the case for instance in the dog-example we used earlier in this paper. For these, we would reserve the term 'emotion' as widely used in the psychological literature. For the purpose of a psychological taxonomy a crucial question would then be, whether we can find affective experiences which specifically pertain to the experience of preindividual tension the way Simondon has in mind with the affective-emotive subconscious.

As we have argued in section 2, we hold that moods are the most likely candidates for this role. Within a Simondonian framework, there are several reasons for this: (1) our discussion of mood´s intentional structure has shown that moods are best characterized by a global intentional orientation toward the "total environment" (Mitchell 2019, p. 123), as a broad horizon for all of one´s current (and potential future) projects. In Simondon, this is precisely what is the case for the affective-emotive in its relation to the subject-environment relation. As we have seen in Simondon´s discussion of pleasure and pain, even in cases where specific sensations or feeling states are involved, the fundamental affective relation is not toward specific events or objects but about a most general relatedness. (2) The globality of mood experiences, as we have seen in Mitchell and more so in Kenaan, extends not only to the current state of one´s relation toward the world, but involves also the anticipation of future events and developments. This is particularly evident in Kenaan´s characterization of moods as inherently oriented

toward change (Kenaan 2017, p. 1474-1475). In Simondon, this is expressed by Simondon in his hyphenated juxtaposition of affective and emotive, where the first term refers to an appresentation of the preindividual set of potential trajectories of becoming, while the second term refers to a more active, motivational orientation toward realizing said potentials. Thus, just as we have discussed for moods, the affective-emotive already involves a tendency to transition and change while at the same time remaining perceptive of the potentials not yet resolved. In light of this dual structure of the experience, we point (3) to our discussion of recent research which shows that moods are specifically involved, when discrepancies between potential outcomes and actualized outcomes are perceived. We think that the idea that moods are intentionally directed at the processual apprehension and resolution of discrepancies between potential (preindividual) individuations and actualized self-environment relations is worth exploring further. (4) Last but not least, we return to our initial observation that moods are inherently oscillating, prone to sudden changes and swings. In light of Simondon´s characterization of preindividual reality as a situation of simultaneously active potential becomings, this feature of moods can be seen as a direct response to the intentional content of the experience. Thus, the ephemeral and often meandering character of moods would be due to the inherent nature of the preindividual to which the experience pertains.

Outlook: Beyond individual moods – collective sense-making and liminality
We started our discussion by referring to Horlick-Jones and colleagues' emphasizing the importance of in-between strategies of sense-making especially in a socio-historical situation which is characterized by insecurity, risk and indeterminacy. With Thomassen (2014) and Stenner (2017), we have shown that such a situation is characterized by the experience of permanent liminality, that is, a fundamental shift in the relation between phases of relative status stability and phases of transition, re-orientation and change. From our reading of Simondon, we conclude that what these authors discuss as a late modern (or even past modern, if one follows Virno, 2004) development is an ontological dimension of human life. In bearing an inexhaustible relation toward the preindividual, living beings are ontologically liminal in so far as they constantly carry a certain potential for destabilization, transition and alterity within their relational orientation to-

ward the environment. However, Simondon´s discussion of individuation is not exhausted in this general conclusion. His analysis of psychic individuation as a specifically human mode of individuation (which moves from perception and the affectivo-emotive to mentalization and the internalization of an experiential relation toward a world of objects) is further extended by a mode of collective individuation which involves the transition from individual toward collective structures. Thus, the preindividual is not just a problem of a solipsistic agent, struggling with containing an excess of potentiality in a vast and empty environment, but it is, and this so right from the start, a collective problematic. This aspect has been taken up by Virno in his analysis of collective structures of experience in societies after the end of modernization (2004). There, he develops a theory of basic collective tonalities of collective agents in societies which are no longer founded on intelligible structures and stable normative foundations. For such a situation, Virno poses the question, what resources agents might collectively turn to in their need to resolve their preindividual problematic. To deal with Virnos answer to this question would be beyond the scope of this paper. We just want to stress, though, that for Virno, the problematic has to be discussed in affective terms, that is, via examining a basic tonality or collective attunement of the multitude toward the contingent conditions of contemporary life. Just like Stenner and Thomassen, Virno discovers a fundamental zone of overlap between affective experiences on an individual level and collective affective structures. We argue that these perspectives might profit from further examining, how affectivity relates to specific phases of change, and transition. A Simondonian perspective on moods as transitional affective experiences which reflect an agent's relation toward preindividual tensions within her relations to self and world can contribute to this end. This will presuppose considering in detail, how shifting moods relate to practices of affective modulation which operate on a transindividual, and collective level. Efforts in this direction have already been made by Hui (2015), and Bösel (2018). Bridging the gap between our conceptual approach (as advocated in this paper) and these authors (who focus on the forces attempting to modulate and shape the affective relations between the subject and its environment) will, however, require to go beyond the realm of the psychological and take into account the transindividual dimension of individuation. Thus, just as Simondon holds that each phase in an individual´s being contains the potential for further individuation,

we conclude this paper by pointing toward potential ways of going beyond the scope of the ideas presented here.

References

Armon-Jones, C. (1991). *Varieties of affect.* University of Toronto Press.

Bauman, Z. (2012). *Liquid modernity.* Polity Press.

Beck, U. (1992). *Risk society: Towards a new modernity.* Sage.

Beck, U., Giddens, A., & Lash, S. (1994). *Reflexive modernization. Politics, tradition & aesthetics in the modern social order.* Stanford University Press.

Bösel, B. (2018). Affect disposition(ing): A genealogical approach to the organization and regulation of emotions. *Media and Communication, 6*(3), 15-21. http://dx.doi.org/10.17645/mac.v6i3.1460.

Combes, M. (2013). *Gilbert Simondon and the philosophy of the transindividual.* MIT Press.

Davidson, R. J. (1994). On emotion, mood, and related affective constructs. In P. Ekman, & R. J. Davidson (Eds.), *The nature of emotion* (pp. 51–55). Oxford University Press.

De Boever, A., Murray, A., Roffe, J., & Woodward A. (Eds.) (2012). *Gilbert Simondon: Being and technology.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Eldar, E., Rutledge, R. B., Dolan, R. J., & Niv, Y. (2015). Mood as representation of momentum. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 20*(1), 15-24. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2015.07.010.

Elpidorou, A., & Freeman, L. (2015). Affectivity in Heidegger I: Moods and emotions in being and time. *Philosophy Compass, 10*(10), 661-671. https://dx.doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12236.

Freeman, L. (2014). Toward a phenomenology of mood. *Southern Journal of Philosophy, 52*(4), 445-476. https://dx.doi.org/10.1111/sjp.12089.

Frijda, N. H. (1993). Moods, emotion episodes, and emotions. In M. Lewis, & J. M. Haviland (Eds.), *Handbook of emotions* (pp. 381-403). New York & London: The Guilford Press.

Greco, M., & Stenner, P. (2017). From paradox to pattern shift: Conceptualising liminal hotspots and their affective dynamics. *Theory & Psychology, 27*(2), 147-166. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354317693120.

Gregg, M., & Seigworth, G. (Eds.) (2010). *The affect theory reader.* Duke University Press.

Heidegger, M. (1993 [1927]). *Sein und Zeit.* Niemeyer.

Helm, B. W. (2002). Felt evaluations: a theory of pleasure and pain. American *Philosophical Quarterly, 39*(1), 13-30. https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073909103593.

Horlick-Jones, T. (2005). Informal logics of risk: Contingency and modes of practical reasoning. *Journal of Risk Research, 8*(3), 253-272. https://doi.org/10.1080/1366987042000270735.

Horlick-Jones, T., Walls, J., & Kitzinger, J. (2007). Bricolage in action: Learning about, making sense of, and discussing, issues about genetically modified crops and food. *Health, Risk & Society, 9*(1), 83-193. https://doi.org/10.1080/13698570601181623.

Hui, Y. (2015). Modulation after control. *New Formations, 84-85*, 74-91. https://doi.org/10.3898/NewF:84/85.04.2015.

Ibarra, H., & Obodaru, O. (2016). Betwixt and between identities: Liminal experience in contemporary careers. *Research in Organizational Behaviour, 36*, 47-64. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2016.11.003.

Kenaan, H. (2017). Changing moods. *Philosophia, 45*, 1469-1479. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11406-017-9895-z.

Langer, S. K. (1948). *Philosophy in a new key. A study in the symbolism of reason, rite, and art.* The new American library.

Mitchell, J. (2019). The intentionality and intelligibility of moods. *European Journal of Philosophy, 27*(1), 118-135. https://doi.org/10.1111/ejop.12385.

Oatley, K., Johnson-Laird, P. N. (2014). Cognitive approaches to emotion. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 18*(3), 134-140. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2013.12.004.

Parkinson, B., Totterdell, P., Briner, R. B., & Reynolds, S. (1996). *Changing moods: The psychology of mood and mood regulation.* Longman.

Raoult, C. M. C., Moser, J., & Gygax, L. (2017). Mood as cumulative expectation mismatch: A test of theory based on data from non-verbal cognitive bias tests. *Frontiers in Psychology, 5*(Art. 2197), 1-10. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.02197.

Ratcliffe, M. (2002). Heidegger´s attunement and the neuropsychology of emotion. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences, 1*(3), 287-312. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1021312100964.

Ratcliffe, M. (2005). The feeling of being. *Journal of Consciousness Studies, 12*(8–10), 43–60.

Ratcliffe, M. (2010). Depression, guilt and emotional depth. *Inquiry, 53*, 602–626.

Ratcliffe, M. (2013). What is it to lose hope? *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences, 12*, 597-614, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-011-9215-1.

Rosa, H. (2013). *Social acceleration. A new theory of modernity.* Columbia University Press.

Russell, J. A., & Barrett, L. F. (1999). Core affect, prototypical emotional episodes, and other things called emotion: Dissecting the elephant. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 76*(5), 805-819.

Scherer, K. (2005). What are emotions? And how can they be measured? *Social Science Information, 44*(4), 695-729. https://doi.org/10.1177/0539018405058216.

Simondon, G. (1992). The genesis of the individual. In J. Crary and S. Kwinter (Ed.) *Incorporations.* New York: Zone.

Simondon, G. (2007). *L´individuation psychique et collective à la lumière des notions de forme, information, potential et métastabilité* [Psychic and collective individuation in light of the notions of form, information, potential and metastability]. Paris: Aubier.

Simondon, G. (2009). The position and the problem of ontogenesis. *Parrhesia, 7*, 4-16.

Simondon, G. (2011). On the mode of existence of technical objects. *Deleuze studies, 5*(3), 407-424. https://dx.doi.org/10.3366/dls.2011.0029.

Simondon, G. (2020). *Individuation in light of notions of form and information.* University of Minnesota Press.

Slaby, J. (2017). More than a feeling: Affect as radical situatedness. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy, XLI*, 7-26.

Stenner, P. (2017). *Liminality and experience: A transdisciplinary approach to the psychosocial.* Palgrave McMillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-27211-9

Szakolczai, A. (2009). Liminality and experience: Structuring transitory situations and transformative events. *International Political Anthropology, 2*(1), 141-172.

Szakolczai, A. (2017). Permanent (trickster) liminality: The reasons of the heart and of the mind. *Theory & Psychology, 27*(2), 231-248. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0959354317694095.

Thomassen, B. (2014). *Liminality and the modern. Living through the in-between.* Ashgate.

Turner, V. (1969). *The ritual process: Structure and anti-structure.* De Gruyter.

Van Gennep, A. (2019). *The rites of passage.* University of Chicago Press.

Virno, P. (2004). *A grammar of the multitude. For an analysis of contemporary forms of life.* Semiotext(e).

Weber, M. (1978). *Economy and society: An outline of interpretive sociology* (Vol. 1). University of California Press.

Whitehead, A. N. (1985 [1927-28]). *Process and reality. An essay in cosmology.* The Free Press.

Wrbouschek, M., & Slunecko, T. (2020). Tensed toward the collective: A Simondonian perspective on human experience in context. *Theory & Psychology.* https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354320943294

Zinn, J. O. (2008). Heading into the unknown: Everyday strategies for managing risk and uncertainty. *Health, Risk & Society, 10*(5), 439-450. https://doi.org/10.1080/13698570802380891.

Zinn, J. O. (2016). 'In-between' and other reasonable ways to deal with risk and uncertainty: A review article. *Health, Risk & Society, 18*(7-8), 348-366. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13698575.2016.1269879.

Concluding discussion

This project aimed at developing an innovative conceptual perspective on moods as transitional experiences that pertain to ongoing processes of individuation (Simondon, 2020). I showed that by adopting Simondon´s process oriented meta-psychological perspective some of the problems that psychologists keep having with the intentional status of moods as well as with their peculiar phenomenal qualities (specifically their oscillating, ephemeral and "whimsical" features) might be resolved (this has been the main purpose of chapter 2). Central to this project has been to shift the focus from the situation of an already constituted psycholog-ical apparatus (e.g. mind) that is conceptualised opposite to a cognitively trans-parent world of objects to the situation of a pre-individual and relational system, an individual in the process of becoming. As I developed in chapter 1 of this dis-sertation, this shift in perspective raises the question how to conceptualise expe-rience as a relational process of becoming oriented toward an associated milieu co-constitutive (Slunecko, 2008) with the becoming individual. Notions of object-specific perception and cognition are not sufficient for such a situation as I argue in chapter 1 and 2 respectively. As an alternative I propose to think of moods as a dimension of experience that is directed precisely toward the tensed and unde-cided relation between the processually emerging individual and the excessive, pre-individual charge of potential (Simondon, 2020) that drives and over-determines individuated being. In chapter 3 I apply this conceptual framework to show how a processual theory of moods might change the way psychologists think about the role of affectivity in cognition, in this case, decision-making under conditions of uncertainty. While chapter 3 provides an idea as to where this alter-native perspective might lead, it also points to some of the limitations that this dissertation project is subjected to. In this concluding reflection of the process and outcome of my work, I address these limitations and present an outlook as to where the ideas developed here might be taken in the future.

Much work has been done in recent years to develop an enactive perspective on human perception, agency and the role of affectivity in this context. At different points during my dissertation project I have engaged in a dialogue with these re-cent trends in the 4E-cognitive sciences tradition; however, there are open ques-tions that need to be addressed. I want to point at just two of these:

(1) In Simondon, affectivity and perception are discussed as two fundamental aspects of an individual´s relative existence with regard to the pre-individual. In this dissertation project I have focused mainly on the affective side of this complex leaving the relation between the affective and perceptive function aside. A future project might start by asking how a psychological theory of individuating moods also concerns the problem of pre-reflective, perceptive awareness. In the phenomenological investigation of moods and other affective phenomena there is the assumption that affect and perception are fundamentally interrelated and that any perceptive awareness of properties of the environment is already grounded in an affective-evaluative disclosing of concern. This is also an important tenet in the enactive tradition (Colombetti, 2017; Thompson, 2007) and it will be interesting to explore the theoretical correspondence between a Simondonian perspective and this enactive tradition further with regard to the perceptive-affective link.

(2) A similar issue revolves around the practical dimension of individuation. In Simondon, the affectivo-emotive relation is developed such that it bridges the conceptual gap between an affective concern with an individual´s charge of pre-individual potential becomings and an emotive orientation toward the emergent milieu. At this latter pole, Simondon situates the problem of motivation and world-oriented activity, thereby establishing a relation between human agency and the affective foundation in a pre-individual affective situation that still contains a multiplicity of potential agencies. From the enactive tradition, different authors have been discussing the relation between affect and agency (see for instance, Weichold, 2018) and it will be interesting to explore these conceptual points of convergence further with a specific focus on moods.

The question how moods pertain to agency and practice leads us to consider another direction that this project might develop toward in the future. As suggested by Colombetti (2017) in her concept of mood scaffolds, mood experiences (and affectivity in general) are deeply interrelated with the social-structural context to which they pertain. Consequently, Weichold (2016) considers his concern-based (thus, affectively grounded) theory of agency as embedded in a wider social-historical context. In Simondon, the collective side of human life is an integral aspect of the theory of individuation. As I develop at various points in the three papers presented here, individuation places the emergent individual within a wider context of a social-historical pre-individual with a scope and range that exceeds

the limitations of a bio-psychological organism. The whole notion of pre-individual potential energy thus pertains to a reality that is already trans-individual. Consequently, Simondon refers to individuation as a double movement of psychic and collective individuation, emphasising that an intra-individual bio-psychological resolution of pre-individual tensions can only be stabilised in conjunction with becoming situated within a collective body, or, a social-structural environment that resonates with the psycho-physical system. The notion of resonance that Simondon employs in this context shares a certain affinity with contemporary perspectives developed in the social sciences and social phenomenology (Mühlhoff, 2015). Specifically, it plays a role in Schmitz' phenomenological theory of atmosphere as an affective property of social bodies (Schmitz, Müllan, & Slaby, 2011). In a similar direction, Slaby (2018) develops his Heidegger-inspired concept of affective arrangement which involves some of the features that concern me in my investigation of moods (see chapter 2 for an in-depth discussion). Schmitz and Slaby are but two examples of the current trend toward understanding collective affective structures and processes (see also, Slaby & von Scheve, 2019). As I discussed with regard to Slaby (and Colombetti) in chapter 2, the focus on the structural function of affectivity comes with a certain risk of underestimating the dynamic features of affective phenomena which are at the centre of my conceptualisation of mood experiences. Thus, I argue that a process-theoretical perspective might also be of interest in an interdisciplinary investigation of the specific role of affectivity in the formation (and subversion) of collective, social and structural arrangements. Respectively, situating a process-theory of transitional moods within the wider context of emerging affective arrangements and milieus (Schütze, 2021) will also help to go beyond the one-sided focus on the psychological dimension of individuation and open the theory of moods toward a trans-individual perspective on the psychic and collective nature of ontogenesis (Simondon, 2020).

With regard to this wider project of affective ontogenesis it will also be important to consider Simondon´s philosophy of technology (De Boever, Murray, & Roffe, 2012). As I mentioned in chapter 1, Simondon was not only interested in social and psychological questions but was also a most profound philosopher of technology and in that regard considered individuation to pertain also to the realm of technical objects. Thus, we are urged to think about the mediated and technically

informed nature of human life in its ongoing becoming. With regard to the modulation of affectivity Bösel (2018) has presented a genealogy of affect dispositifs. There he addresses the issue of psycho-social affect from the point of view of the technological apparatuses aimed at governing and modulating affective properties in different historical formations. With regard to the psychological investigation of mood regulating techniques and practices this opens up an interdisciplinary field of research. As Bösel (2018) shows, these regulative or modulating practices should not be considered as external "influences" directed at a psychological state of a psychological system. Rather, the constitution of a "mooded" relation between an individual and its associated milieu (in Simondon´s terms) is already mediated and governed by a regime of forces and relations that we might consider to operate on a pre-individual level. Drawing from Simondon and extending the scope of investigation to his philosophy of technology, I would be interested to further investigate how the modulation of affective properties might be brought into correspondence with a media-theoretical project (Bösel, 2018). This also relates to Simondon´s theory of the transindividual relation which is about acknowledging that individuation is not merely the becoming of an individual (psycho-physiological) being, but refers to an individual relative to a social system.

One final question that arises at this point is, whether it might be useful – at least for psychological and, specifically, empirical investigations of affective life – to develop a more fine-grained taxonomy of affective experiences based on the phase-status of a (becoming) individual within ongoing processes of individuation. A starting point for this – as I hinted at in the conclusion to paper 2 and 3, respectively – might be Stenner´s work on liminality as a fundamental dimension of human life. Just as in my Simondon-inspired process theory of moods, Stenner regards the liminal aspects of becoming, transition and emergence as epistemologically prior to stable psychosocial relations (Greco & Stenner, 2017). However, where I focus more on the mood-specific affective relation to a pre-individual psychosocial reality, Stenner (2017) already situates this relation (or at least a similar concept derived from his reading of Whitehead, Langer, and others) within a transition model informed by van Gennep´s (2019) and Turner´s (1969) theories of the ritual process. Within such a phase model that distinguishes between liminal periods of transition and phases of relative stability, it might be possible to

take an alternative look at psychological emotion concepts as pertaining to different stages of stabilised and de-stabilised self- and world orientations. What I discussed as traditional conceptualisations of emotion in the first half of chapter 2 (emotions as object-specific appraisals) might thus be situated in phases of relative stability where the affective evaluative apprehension of features of an environment is based in a stable form of process. Moods on the other hand might relate to the unresolved transitional phases that Stenner argues to be epistemologically primordial and that I understand to pertain to the unresolved over-determination of any phase of individuation by pre-individual tensions and potential. Such an attempt at formulating a process-theoretically informed taxonomy of affective variants seems to be in line with considerations formulated by Bösel (presentation at the ISTP-conference in Copenhagen 2019).

In a wider context this project is sympathetic with efforts in psychology that emphasise the importance of emergent properties of psychological phenomena and advocate for a dynamic process perspective on psychic acts relative to situational and structural features of the environment. In that regard, in drawing from different perspectives and bridging disciplinary fields the papers assembled in this dissertation contribute to what Stenner calls "a transdisciplinary approach to the psychosocial" (Stenner, 2017). Within this wider context I hope that the concept of transitional moods will prove a useful conceptual element that helps to better understand not only the scope and function of affectivity in the becoming of psychosocial orientations toward self and world, but also to foster empirical research in everyday affective experiences, and particularly their more transient and ephemeral, dimensions.

References

Bösel, B. (2018). Affect disposition(ing): A genealogical approach to the organization and regulation of emotions. *Media and communication, 6*(3), 15-21. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v6i3.1460.

Colombetti, G. (2017). The embodied and situated nature of moods. *Philosophia, 45*(4), 1437–1451. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11406-017-9817-0.

De Boever, A., Murray, A., & Roffe, J. (Eds.). (2012). *Gilbert Simondon: Being and technology.* Edinburgh university press.

Greco, M., & Stenner, P. (2017). From paradox to pattern shift: conceptualising liminal hotspots and their affective dynamics. *Theory & psychology, 27*(2), 147-166. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354317693120.

Mühlhoff, R. (2015). Affective resonance and social interaction. *Phenomenology and the cognitive sciences, 14*, 1001-1019. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-014-9394-7.

Schmitz, H., Müllan, R. O., & Slaby, J. (2011). Emotions outside the box – the new phenomenology of feeling and corporeality. *Phenomenology and the cognitive sciences, 10*(2), 241-259. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-011-9195-1.

Schütze, P. (2021). From affective arrangements to affective milieus. *Frontiers in psychology, 11*(Art. 611827). https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.611827.

Simondon, G. (2020). *Individuation in light of notions of form and information.* University of Minnesota press.

Slaby, J. (2018). Affective arrangements and disclosive postures: Towards a post-phenomenology of situated affectivity. URL: http://janslaby.com/downloads/slaby2017_-_affective_arrangements_and_disclosive_postures_web_vorab.pdf.

Slaby, J., & von Scheve, C. (Eds.). (2019). *Affective societies. Key concepts.* Routledge.

Slunecko, T. (2008). *Von der Konstruktion zur dynamischen Konstitution. Beobachtungen auf der eigenen Spur.* Facultas.

Stenner, P. (2017). *Liminality* and *experience: A transdisciplinary approach to the psychosocial.* Palgrave McMillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-27211-9

Thompson, E. (2007). *Mind in life: Biology, phenomenology, and the sciences of mind.* Belknap press.

Turner, V. (1969). *The ritual process: structure and anti-structure.* De Gruyter.

Van Gennep, A. (2019). *The rites of passage.* University of Chicago press.

Weichold, M. (2016). Mastering sociocultural contingencies: On extending the sensorimotor theory to the domain of culture. *Journal of consciousness studies, 23*(5–6), 203–227.

Weichold, M. (2018). Situated agency: Towards an affordance-based, sensorimotor theory of action. *Phenomenology and the cognitive sciences, 17*(4), 761–785. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-017-9548-5.

Abstract

This doctoral thesis aims at developing an innovative conceptual perspective on mood experiences. Engaging in a critical interdisciplinary dialogue with recent developments in the field of enactive psychology and phenomenology of emotion the papers assembled in this dissertation focus on a set of interrelated problems that psychologists keep having with (1) the intentional structure of moods and (2) their phenomenal qualities. Based on a critical examination of existing psychological conceptualisations of moods I argue that contemporary theories of mood tend to underestimate the importance of the shifting, ephemeral and oscillating features of mood experiences. As such, moods should neither be reduced to intentional affective appraisals of specific events or objects within an otherwise intelligible situational arrangements, nor should they be regarded non-intentional dispositional states of a bio-psychological organism. Drawing from Simondon´s meta-psychological theory of individuation I develop an alternative theoretical perspective on moods as transitional experiences appresenting the emergent relation of a becoming psycho-collective being to their pre-individual, potential reality. I provide an outlook toward ways in which this conceptual perspective might be applied to look at psychological research on mood-related phenomena in a different way.

Zusammenfassung

Das Projekt zielt auf die Entwicklung einer innovativen, konzeptuellen Perspektive auf die Erfahrung von Stimmungen. In kritischer, interdisziplinärer Auseinandersetzung mit aktuellen Entwicklungen innerhalb einer enaktivistischen Psychologie, sowie phänomenologischen Ansätzen in der Phänomenologie der Emotionen fokussieren die in dieser Dissertation versammelten Artikel in spezifischer Weise miteinander verwobene Problembereiche gegenwärtiger, psychologischer Stimmungskonzepte: (1) betreffend die intentionale Gerichtetheit von Stimmungserfahrungen und (2) bezüglich der eigentümlichen Erfahrungsqualität von Stimmungen. Auf Basis einer kritischen Untersuchung zeitgenössischer, psychologischer Stimmungskonzepte argumentiere ich, dass Stimmungstheorien dazu neigen, den wechselhaften, ephemeren und oszillierenden Aspekten von Stim-

mungserfahrungen nicht angemessen Rechnung zu tragen. Stimmungen sollten weder auf affektive Wertungen bezüglich prinzipiell intelligibler Objekte oder Ereignisse reduziert, noch lediglich als nicht-intentionale Dispositionen eines bio-psychologischen Organismus verstanden werden. Ausgehend von Simondons meta-psychologischenTheorie der Individuation entwickle ich eine alternative Theorie der Stimmung als transitorische Erfahrung der emergenten Relation eines psycho-kollektiven Systems zu der ihm zugrunde liegenden, potentiellen (in Simondons Worten: präindividuellen) Realität. In Ausblicken zeige ich, wie die hier entwickelte Perspektive genutzt werden kann, um stimmungsbezogene Phänomene aus einem neuen Blickwinkel in Angriff zu nehmen.