

Drift, Naturally: A Transaffective Unfolding

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The 11th Beyond Humanism Conference

Critical Posthumanism & Transhumanism

The Posthuman Paradigm Shift

9-12 July 2019

Co-organizers :
Catholic University of Lille
Faculty of Arts and Humanities
ETHICS EA-7446

Location :
Faculty of medicine,
56 rue du port, Lille
France

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<https://lillethics.com>
<http://beyondhumanism.org>



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Drift, Naturally: A Transaffective Unfolding

As philosopher Gilbert Simondon states, both physical and technical individuals determine their genetic and their epigenetic context through their technicities and through their structural couplings: from the *genetic* and the *epigenetic* to the *epiphylogenetic*. Moreover, if indeed living is a process of cognition then the signs that populate the medium of any coupling are what essentially drive evolution. Decisively, the cognition of signs is not a matter of a digital cognition, *this* sign over *that*, but rather a constant ethological – hence, affective – practice. Therefore, the medium, as the continuum of the singular and ordinary points of a technicity, involves both the production and the perception of signs. Consequently, in the inter-exchangeability of matter, energy and information that any structural coupling potentializes, affects do not belong to an individual alone, but rather *transaffectivity* becomes the constitutive aspect of any process of individuation.

If any individual is determined only by its affects as they are catalysed in the technicities it unfolds, then one can no longer speak of posthumanism or transhumanism but of transaffectivity. Among genetic, epigenetic and epiphylogenetic elements there unfolds a play of intensive material informational exchange, in the form of signs, which determine both the structural and operational affects of any entity. Hence, evolution returns to its original Latin meaning, namely from the term *evolutio*: to unfold. Contrary to the logics of the survival of the fittest, unfolding does not dictate in advance which forms come forth, but instead, it determines which of them are not viable. This is the main argument of Jacob van Uexküll, the pioneer of ecological thinking, against Darwinism: a theory of evolution should be a theory of fewer folds, an unfolding of folds, and not a theory that explains the complexity of unfolding by introducing a static element that drives it; nothing drives the unfolding but the unfolding itself.

In other words, it is the condition that brings forward a new world, one that is viable through the very differentials that determine the condition, and not the other way around. In this paper I will examine how structurally coupled individuals unfold an intensive continuum where there is no natural selection prescribing any outcome, but a continuous natural drift. The affective potentials that produce and are produced in the technicities of the drifted unfolding do not need to be the best, but simply good enough. Put succinctly, evolution, or more precisely, individuation, is satisficing rather than optimising. Love – human, machinic, everything in between – and not Darwinian struggle or opposition, is what determines evolution: not an affective diminishing but instead an affirmative, transaffective amplification, where any individual structurally coupled with another, brings forth a world through an aberrant nuptial, not because it must but simply because it can.

Keywords:

Structural Coupling, Technicity, Individuation, Ethology, Epiphylogenetics

Bio:

Dr. ir. Stavros Kousoulas studied Architecture at the National Technical University of Athens and at TU Delft. Since 2012, as a researcher and lecturer, he has been part of the Theory Chair of the Faculty of Architecture of TU Delft. He received his doctoral title cum laude from IUAV Venice participating in the Villard d' Honnecourt International Research Doctorate. He has published and lectured in Europe and abroad. He is a member of the editorial board of Footprint Delft Architecture Theory Journal since 2014.