

Angelika Seppi

Simply Complicated: Thinking in Folds

I) “Trying to see the grass in things and words”

“Those things which occur to me, occur to me not from the root up but rather only from somewhere about their middle”, Franz Kafka writes in his *Diaries* and continues: “Let someone then attempt to seize them, let someone attempt to seize a blade of grass and hold fast to it when it begins to grow only from the middle.”¹ In *A Thousand Plateaus* Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari pick up the thread and confirm that it is “not easy to see things in the middle, rather than looking down on them from above or up at them from below, or from left to right or right to left: [...]. It is not easy,” they write, “to see the grass in things and in words [...]”² Trying to see the grass in things and words, to perceive of things and words in their becoming, is one of the many devices Deleuze and Guattari adopt to designate the main direction of their shared philosophical endeavor. Their multifaceted philosophical journey unfolds throughout a lifetime of thinking and writing, relentlessly stepping into new and uncertain terrain. All the elements constituting the open totality of their work resonate in an overall pursuit of an affirmative theory of multiplicity, difference and becoming. While multiplicity, difference and becoming are anything but novel philosophical concepts, it is their unconditional affirmation, which constitutes a departure from what has been labeled, since Friedrich Nietzsche, the underlying negativity/nihilism, which informs western thought from Socrates to Hegel and beyond. From Plato onwards – that is how the thread of European philosophy is traced by Nietzsche and weaved further by Deleuze and Guattari among others – the triumph of thought over life is synonymous with the triumph of the intelligible over the

1 Kafka 1948, 12.

2 Deleuze /Guattari 1987, 44.

sensorial, of the ideal over the material, of the one over the multiple, of identity over difference, of being over becoming.³

The paper develops the fold as a counter-figure and a counter-concept to any such dichotomous overlay. Taking as its point of departure Jacques Derrida's notion of the *undecidable* that resists and disorganizes philosophy's binary order from the very inside of the philosophical text itself, the paper pursues the fold as an exemplary figure of the *logic of the supplement* accordingly developed. By doing so the fold is further traced in its etymological links, its conceptual lineage and its material manifestations, and along the aesthetic riddles it poses. The abundance of terms, such as *simplicity*, *complexity*, *implication*, *explication*, *application*, *multiplication* – all of whom etymological derivations of the latin *plicare* (to fold), *plectere* (to plait, twine), following the greek *plékein* (to plait, to weave) – serves as an initial indicator to the degree to which our language and thought are permeated by folds and processes of folding. Regarding their material manifestations, they stretch out from the folds of drapery to the folds of living tissue, from the diptychs of antique tablets and reliefs to the explicit or implicit diptychs of painting, from book-folds to present-day folded Note-Books, from the art of folding paper to foldable architecture, from biological processes such as invagination or protein-folding to René Thom's famous morphological catastrophes. Correspondingly broad is the span of disciplines, within and beyond their limits – the fold extends itself, from philosophy to mathematics, biology, physics and chemistry, from the arts to art history, and so on.

Touching upon a variety of viewpoints, Gilles Deleuze's work *The fold. Leibniz and the Baroque* will figure as a thread weaved through the arguments developed in this paper. The guiding image will be provided by the Leibnizian-Deleuzian allegory of the Baroque house of thought – an allegory of the single, virtual plane that unfolds both the pleats of matter and the folds of the soul. (fig. 1) According to Deleuze, the world in general – encompassing the virtual plane that is unfolded through the pleats of matter and the folds of the soul – thus becomes comparable to an infinitely folded curve that extends to infinity.⁴ Regarding the fold's complexity, the question arises, whether and how a comprehensive concept of the fold is possible at all. To develop a philosophical concept of the fold is certainly what Deleuze attempts to do in his reading of Leibniz. To retrace Deleuze's attempt to conceptualize the fold, will thus form the main focus of this paper. Finally, thinking in folds will be evoked as an attempt to re-conceptualize the distributions that constitute our world from the point of view of their becoming. With Deleuze and Derrida

3 A generalization such as this is merely provocative, of course, so that if ever there was any truth to the famous quip by Alfred North Whitehead, maintaining western philosophy to be no more than a series of footnotes to Plato (Whitehead 1978, 39), this series would have to comprise the countless attempts, dating as far back as Plato himself, to counter Platonism and its underlying dichotomous structures.

4 Cf. Deleuze 1993a, 24.

I will conclude the arguments presented in this paper by indicating an essential non-being and not-being-now that subverts the commonly assumed positivity and presence of being.

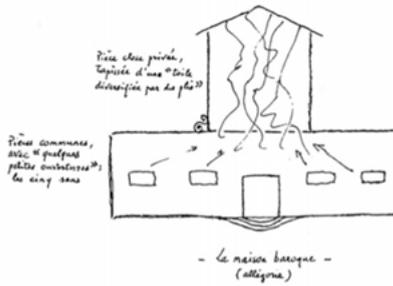


Fig. 1: Gilles Deleuze, The Baroque house (allegory).

II) Where does a fold begin and where does it end?

In his attempt to further advance a critique of western metaphysics Derrida pointed out not only to the hierarchical and dichotomous structure informing western metaphysics – presence, truth, identity or unity being prioritized over absence, error, difference or multiplicity – but also to the ambivalences lying at its core. Let us take, as an example, Derrida’s famous reading of Plato’s *Phaedrus*⁵. The dialogue between Socrates and Phaedrus moves from an initial query concerning love, to a discussion on the merits of speech in contrast to writing. It comes as no surprise that Socrates – digressing into the myth of Thoth, who figures as the inventor of the so called *pharmakon* of writing – condemns writing while positing direct speech as the only proper vehicle of truth. To be sure, Derrida is not concerned with presenting yet another evidence of western logo-centrism, but rather with unfolding a complexity intrinsic to the Platonic text itself. He points to a double meaning embedded in the text – *pharmakon* is both a remedy *and* a poison – suggesting the undecidable lies already in the text itself, Derrida explains:

“It has been necessary to analyze, to set to work, *within* the text of the history of philosophy, as well as *within* the so-called literary text [...] certain marks [...] that [...] I have called undecidables, that is, unities of simulacrum, false verbal properties (nominal or semantic) that can no longer be included within philosophical (binary) opposition, resisting and disorganizing it, without ever constituting a third term, *without ever* leaving room for a solution in the form of speculative

5 Derrida 1981a, 61–171.

dialectics [...]. (the *pharmakon* is neither remedy nor poison, neither good nor evil, neither the inside nor the outside, neither speech nor writing; the *supplement* is neither a plus or a minus, neither an outside nor the complement of an inside, neither accident nor essence etc.; the *hymen* is neither confusion nor distinction, neither identity nor difference, neither consummation nor virginity, neither the veil nor the unveiling, neither the inside nor the outside, etc. [...]).”⁶

Derrida’s doubly folded words such as *pharmakon*, *différance*, *hymen* etc., encapsulating two contradictory layers of meaning, exemplify a general *logic of the supplement*, a “neither/nor, that is, simultaneously either/or”, which persists at the core of metaphysical dichotomies themselves, and erodes them from the inside out.⁷

Leaving aside, for the time being, the difficult questions concerning the status of terms such as *pharmakon*, *différance*, *supplement* or *hymen* (are they textual emblems of an overall logic of compounded difference, is the difference they set at play also textual, how do textual emblems and differences relate to a non-textual exteriority, is there indeed any so-called outside to the text at all?), I will focus instead on the fold as a case study for the differentiation implicit to the logic of the supplement. What is folded *now* operates neither as a plus nor as a minus, neither in addition to nor as a subtraction from what has already been folded *then*. It is both a plus and a minus, both an addition and a subtraction. It is neither different from what is, nor the same; rather, it is at the very same instance different and the same. It neither reveals nor conceals what has already been folded; rather, it both reveals and conceals. Imagine, for example, an ordinary sheet of paper lying on a desk. As it is being folded, the sheet of paper both increases when considering the dimensions of the embedded space and reduces when considering the space it occupies on the desk. It is still the same sheet of paper – nothing has changed with regard to the paper’s chemical composition – yet it is quite different; everything has changed when considering the space it embeds and the space it is embedded in. Furthermore it not only preserves some of its main features, it also stores the potential energy of the process of transformation it underwent. It thus reveals itself as its own present and past. It also reveals other aspects, invisible up until folded, its bottom surface, for example, or flexibility, while repressing others, its former top surface, for example, or its full extension. As another example, consider the fascination invoked by the flow of drapery, the loose sagging of folds, manifest in Greek plastics and onwards in contemporary fashion, with its unresolved, ongoing play of veiling–unveiling the enveloped body. Johann Gottfried Herder in *Some observations on Shape and Form from Pygmalions Creative dream* reflects at length on the interplay between clothing and unveiling. How,

6 Derrida 1981b, 43.

7 Ibid.

Herder asked, could the Greek artist “clothe in such a way that nothing is hidden? Could he drape a body and yet allow it to retain its stature and its beautiful rounded fullness?”⁸ Wet drapery was the answer. Only wet drapery made it possible to clothe, without veiling the body, so that drapery became, in art, what was impossible for it in actuality, a “so to speak drapery, a cloud, a veil, a mist.”⁹ Herder’s reflections hinge on a distinction between the deceptive character of wet drapery, a “so to speak drapery, a cloud, a veil, a mist. [...] so to speak, just as Homers gods possess blood only so to speak,” and the “fullness of the body,” which in his eyes remains “the very essence of sculpture, and not merely so to speak.”¹⁰ With Nietzsche, however, the fullness of the body had become synonymous with the veil itself. Hence his praise for the old Greeks: “Oh, those Greeks! They knew how to live. What is required for that is to stop courageously at the surface, the fold, the skin, to adore appearance, to believe in forms, tones, words, the whole Olympus of appearance. Those Greeks were superficial – out of profundity.”¹¹ Already in its naive manifestations – a folded sheet of paper, the sagging of folds in drapery – the fold attests to what have been and still are almost unthinkable in western philosophy: a difference beyond oppositions, unities of simulacrum rather than binaries of truth, superficiality out of profundity.

Against this backdrop, in what follows, I will attempt to delineate the extent to which thinking in folds both allows us and obliges us to re-conceptualize that which we typically signify using dichotomous dyads: one and many, subject and object, existence and essence, form and matter and so on. Within all unities of simulacra evoked by the fold – difference and identity, addition and substitution, veiling and unveiling, unity and multiplicity, inside and outside, open and closed – what interests me most, is the *double-bind* along which Deleuze develops the fold as both the impersonal machinist of the endless process of becoming, and the final cause of enclosure and finitude. On the one hand the fold will thus be described as a pure, dimensionless event that falls out of time and space, preceding every specific entity and the world in general; on the other hand the fold will figure as the curve enveloping this or that specific series of events or the world as an infinite curve in general. Is it still the same fold at both its ends? Where does the fold begin and where does it end? How to account for a world that is both given to an infinite process of becoming *and* is expressed by finite phenomena? How does the finite enter the infinite? It is in pursuit of these questions, that Deleuze, in his later writings, turned to the fold and to an affirmative reading of Leibniz, albeit in his earlier writings

8 Herder 1778b, 50.

9 Ibid, 51. In the german original it reads: “Das Kleid wurde in der Natur, was es in der Kunst nicht seyn kann: *gleichsam* ein Kleid, ein umhüllender Nebel.” Herder 1778a, vol. 8, 137.

10 Herder 1778b, 51.

11 Nietzsche 1882, 38.

he was less sympathetic towards the so-called last polymath of European philosophy.¹² To reiterate, the double-bind develops along two complementary trajectories, a genuine differentiation, giving raise to the endless production of difference, *and* the differentiated as the finite product inevitably hiding the process of production it underwent.¹³ As I will argue throughout, unfolding was Deleuze's final turn of phrase for the *pas de deux*, in which differentiation takes place while its very taking place is already covered over by the differentiated itself.¹⁴

III) What kind of dress for which kind of thought?

In her Neo-Baroque novel *Rachels Röckchen*, Charlotte Mutsaers develops the protagonist's portrait in a metaphorical gown vividly unfolding in numerous twists and turns. The gown's folds are described as dangling around Rachel, as spinning, wiggling, welting, blazing, flattering, crawling upon her, shimmering, crinkling, sweeping, dancing, curling, murmuring, rustling, flowing, flickering, swinging, winking, puffing up or collapsing: "the way all the folds are continuously branching out, ditching themselves or transiting from one to the other, and the way, once in a while, you catch a glimpse of what, lonely and clandestine, is happening in between or even underneath, is all that counts."¹⁵ In *The fold* Deleuze on his part develops the texture of Leibniz's garment in its vivacious folds with their uncountable curves, swerves and inclinations. With one exception: Deleuze is not concerned with what transpires underneath the play of folds, but merely with what happens in between the folds. The fold in itself, as I will attempt to demonstrate, renders superfluous any attempt at depth beyond the surface. For what is the fold, but a paradoxical figure of transition between surface and depth?

Before discussing Deleuze's concept of the fold in detail, a few notes on his style are in order. Deleuze has explicitly pointed out the role which style plays for him within philosophy: "Becoming stranger to ones self, to ones language and nation, is not this the peculiarity of the philosopher and philosophy, or their style or what is called a

12 In *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression* Deleuze compares Spinoza's and Leibniz's anti-Cartesianism (Deleuze 1968). In *Difference and Repetition* Leibniz is portrayed, together with Hegel, as the philosopher of infinite representation. In Deleuze's critique of representation, Leibniz's philosophy is criticized, although a more affirmative tone concerning Leibniz's notion of vicediction is present as well. In relation to the notions of vicediction and compossibility, Leibniz once again plays an important role in another example of Deleuze's earlier work *Logique du sens* (1969). A systematic exposition of Leibniz's philosophy is ultimately presented in *The fold. Leibniz and the Baroque*. Deleuze's engagement with Leibniz can also be traced throughout his lecture series at the University of Paris in 1980 and in 1986/7. Cf. Lærke 2015, 1194–96.

13 Cf. Deleuze 1994, Chap. IV, *Ideas and Synthesis of Difference*, 168–221, especially 209–210.

14 The French expression *pas de deux* plays with the ambiguity implicit in *pas*, oscillating between negation and step.

15 Mutsaers 1997, 14 (trans. A.S.).

philosophical gobbledygook?”¹⁶ As Deleuze and Guattari clarify in *What is Philosophy?* style has nothing to do with rhetoric, and everything to do with “sensations: percepts and affects, landscapes and faces, visions and becomings.”¹⁷ Style can thus be said to be the ever-singular manner by which philosophy as the art of creating concepts encounters its outside, the non-philosophical, the non-conceptual, the un-thought, the power that befalls thought and forces it to think. It is the ever-singular manner by which the outside of thought is folded into its very core and the duplicity of inside and outside finds itself reinforced in as far as style manifests itself as thought’s very own garb. It goes without saying, neither thought nor language are ever truly naked. It goes without saying, there is no substantial body waiting to be unveiled under their dresses and drapes. Along the undisciplined style characteristic to Deleuze’s writing *The fold* demolishes the common practice of a well-defined line of investigation and deals with folds in all their possible extension reaching from the folds as cosmic events to the infinite curve of the world, from the folds in and of mathematics to the folds in and of the arts and philosophy, from the Baroque to postmodernity, from Leibniz to Whitehead, from Caravaggio to Pollock etc. Thus, *The fold* is certainly not to be conceived as yet another scholarly exploration of Leibniz’s philosophy, though it undoubtedly grants novel, unexpected insights into the latter. It is first and foremost an attempt to develop a philosophical concept or an aesthetic of the fold. And it is the fold along which the conceptual portrait of Leibniz is drawn. Just as in a drawing or a painting, the art of the portrait is not a matter of producing the closest possible likeness of the sitter, but the production of the resemblance itself.¹⁸ Far from suggesting a sober, clinical reproduction, Deleuze’s strategy of a conceptual portrait implies a transformation of both sitter and artist, in this case, a type of becoming-Deleuze of Leibniz as well as a becoming-Leibniz of Deleuze. At times it might be hard to tell apart, which point of view is at present under consideration, is it Leibniz’s or Deleuze’s? Perhaps after reading *The fold* both perspectives have become more obscure, while at the same time the concept itself has gained in distinctness.¹⁹ In any event, to whom does a concept belong?

The common alignment that holds together both sides of the Leibnizian-Deleuzian becoming is the line itself, a special kind of line – a curved, or what amounts to the same, a

16 Deleuze/Guattari 1994, 110.

17 Ibid, 177.

18 Cf. Deleuze 1993b, 197.

19 As Deleuze argued in *Difference and Repetition*, in reference to Leibniz and his famous example of the murmuring sea, “distinct-obscure” or “confused and clear” are far more promising couplings than Descartes’s “distinct and clear”. “Confused and clear” and “distinct and obscure” are both called for in philosophy: the former as an Apollonian distinction regarding the “whole noise” of the sea and no longer being able to account for the little perceptions constituting it, the latter as a Dionysian distinction regarding the little perceptions and no longer being able to account for the “whole noise”: “However, the two never unite in order to reconstitute a natural light. Rather, they compose two languages which are encoded in the language of philosophy and directed at the divergent exercise of the faculties: the disparity of style.” Deleuze 1994, 213.

folded line.²⁰ Throughout his work Deleuze is breaking away from a certain paradigm of linearity, just as another kind of line undeniably keeps informing his thought. His writings abound in lines: “lines and speeds” is the magic formula of *A Thousand Plateaus*.²¹ In his engagement with Leibniz and the Baroque, a certain point on the line, the point of inflection – the point at which a curve changes from negative downward concavity to positive upward concavity or vice versa – is crowned a cosmo-genetic element *par excellence*. Referring to Paul Klee, Deleuze identifies the point of inflection with the formers famous *Graupunkt*, a “point without dimension”, a point “between dimensions”, the aforementioned “locus of cosmo-genesis.”²² Thus the curved line – curves and folds are employed synonymously, to a certain extent, by Deleuze – essentially becomes active, its agent being a point in motion, every motion – an event.²³ (fig. 2)

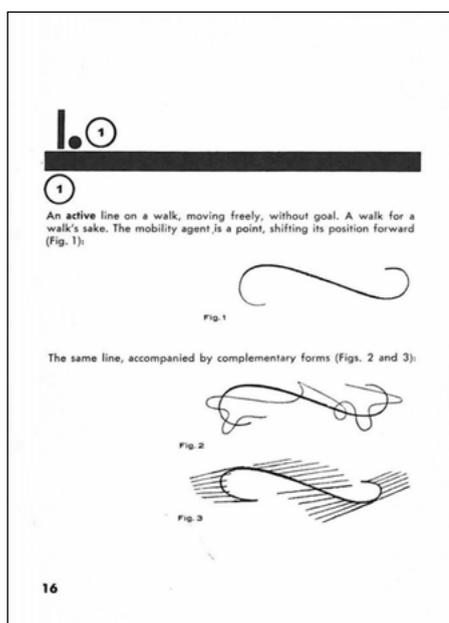


Fig. 2: Paul Klee, An active line on a walk.

20 Though Deleuze's reference to passages, in which Leibniz explicitly uses the terms 'fold' or 'folding', are rather scarce, the fold nevertheless and without a doubt constitutes the main interpretive move both for his reading of Leibniz and his understanding of the Baroque. His most important references are to Leibniz's *Pacidius to Philaletes* (Leibniz 1676, 145); *Protogaea* (written between 1791–1793), see Leibniz 2008, chap. VIII, 20–25; *Die philosophischen Schriften*, see Leibniz 1965a, IV, 481–482; VI, § 61, 617; VII, 453. Deleuze's intuition, regarding the role the fold plays in Leibniz's texts, has been affirmed – even though Deleuze could not have foreseen that – by later publications out of Leibniz's oeuvre. Cf. for ex. Leibniz 1999, VI, 1401, 1687, 1900. Cf. Lærke 2015, 1197–98.

21 Deleuze/Guattari 1987, 4.

22 Deleuze 1993a, 30. Cf. Klee 1956, 3–4.

23 Cf. Klee 1953, 16. By no means accidental, Klee also portrays the active line as an S-shape in reverse, reminiscent of the *figura serpentinata*, which, particularly in mannerism, played a decisive role with respect to the disturbance or distortion of classical forms. Cf. Uhlig 2007, 307.

As the beginning of the world the event of the fold in a way falls out of time and space and as such only gives rise to the dimensions and coordinates constituting the quantitative space-time, in which we are moving, practically and theoretically, from one place, from one moment, from one topic to another. It is against the backdrop of the event that Deleuze breaks with the paradigm of linearity in order to replace one kind of line with another – the straight line of the classical age with the curved line or fold of the Baroque – a substitution which also exchanges one kind of philosopher for another, and thus exchanges two types of reason: René Descartes’s with Leibniz’s. Concerning the twofold labyrinth within which both Descartes and Leibniz find themselves wandering, “the continuous labyrinth in matter and its parts, the labyrinth of freedom in the soul and its predicates,” Deleuze writes:

“If Descartes did not know how to get through the labyrinth, it was because he sought its secret of continuity in rectilinear tracks, and the secret of liberty in a rectitude of the soul. He knew the inclusion of the soul as little as he did the curvature of matter. A cryptographer is needed, someone who can at once account for nature and decipher the soul, who can peer into the crannies of matter and read into the folds of the soul.”²⁴

While all straight lines resemble each other, the curved line or fold implies infinite variation. Every fold takes on a different course, just as no two things – leaves, rocks, rivers, drops of water, etc. – are folded in the same way, not one regular fold pervades one and the same thing. With Leibniz and Deleuze the fold is everywhere and nowhere the same. Hence, the fold must not be perceived as universality, but rather as a universal differentiator. From Deleuze’s perspective, it is taking the divergent path, preferring the swerve to the straight line that lends Leibniz’s conceptual portrait its specific baroque traits. With “inclusion of the soul” and “curvature of matter” Deleuze points at the main characteristics, which in his eyes allow for an approximation to the Baroque in and beyond Leibniz.²⁵ Unsurprisingly, Deleuze is not interested in contributing to the debates regarding the history of style or the epochal concept of the Baroque. His interests are rather directed at an elaboration of what he identifies as the “operative function” of the Baroque, a function that consists in endlessly producing folds, pushing the folds to infinity “fold over fold, one upon the other.”²⁶

24 Deleuze 1993a, 3.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

IV) Falling drapes and folded tableaux

To be sure, the fold is not a genuine invention of the Baroque. Much of art history could be portrayed – and Georges Didi-Huberman did indeed attempt to do so in *Ninfa moderna* – as the history of folds or falling drapes.²⁷ Here too, it all begins with something going quite radically off-course; *clinamen* is the word Didi-Huberman borrows from the Latin philosopher and poet Lucretius (1st c. B.C.E.) to express the pervasive obliqueness of things.²⁸ In his philosophical and didactic poem *De rerum Natura* Lucretius employs the term *clinamen* to translate Epicurus' *parenklisis*, the indiscernible motion by which atoms are thought to be veering minimally from free fall. Whilst hurtling straight down through empty space, the atoms simultaneously diverge from their path, through some impetus of their own; moreover, they do so at an angle and speed that can neither be comprehended nor imagined.

“The atoms, as their own weight bears them down / Plumb through
the void, at scarce determined times, / In scarce determined places,
from their course / Decline a little – call it, so to speak, / Mere changed
trend. For were it not their wont / Thuswise to swerve, down would
they fall, each one, / Like drops of rain, through the unbottomed
void; / And then collisions ne'er could be nor blows / Among the
primal elements; and thus / Nature would never have created aught.”²⁹

Because atoms decline from parallel paths, they hit each other. Collisions and blows, cosmic turbulences, are the result, ultimately leading to the metastable systems of different worlds. Didi-Huberman refers to the Lucretian *clinamen* in order to track the long history of the falling drape in a kind of cinematographic documentary, consolidating the innumerable swerves of the fold in European art history. Through the eyes of Aby Warburg, through a modern science of the image, Didi-Huberman lets his movie of falling drapes depart from the motif of the nymph. Nymphs: “wonderfully draped apparitions which come from who knows where; prancing in the wind, always touching, not always well-behaved, almost always erotic, sometimes disturbing.”³⁰ Using the examples of the

27 Didi-Huberman 2006.

28 Lucretius' *De rerum Natura* (DRN) figures not only as a translation of Epicurus's philosophy of nature, but also as one of the most important and elaborated documents of materialism and atomism of antiquity. In the DRN the world as such is thought of as an infinite material texture (*textura rerum*), the atoms being the elements out of which the texture is woven by their own spontaneity (*sponte sua*). While Epicurus defined them negatively as indivisible bodies, ἄτομοι, Lucretius characterizes them additionally as seeds of things (*semina rerum*) and generative bodies (*genitalia corpora*) to underline their formative aspects. He also calls them blind/invisible bodies (*corpora caeca*) in order to emphasize the aimless and chaotic dynamic they are involved in and set at play. The atoms' aimless and chaotic nature refers back to the above-introduced *clinamen*. Cf. Moser 2014, 5.

29 Lucretius, *De rerum natura* (1st c. B.C.E.), in: Lucretius 1994–2000, II, v. 217–224.

30 Didi-Huberman 2006, 11.

so called *florentine nymph* in Ghirlandaio's *Birth of Johannes*, as well as in Botticelli's *Allegory of Spring* and *Birth of Venus*, Warburg exposed the *afterlife of antiquity* throughout renaissance and humanism, paying special attention to the displacement of the *pathos formula* from the figure to its edges, to hair and the folds of cloth fluttering in the wind, to the mobile accessories (*bewegtes Beiwerk*).³¹ (Fig. 3)



Fig. 3: Domenico Ghirlandaio, "The birth of Johannes", 1486 – 1490, fresco, S. Maria Novella, Cappella Tornabuoni, detail.

On the verge of modern representation, Didi-Huberman asserts that Warburg's nymph would not only have "slowed her pace" but would finally have tumbled over. (Fig. 4, fig. 5) Between the decline of drapes and the fall of the nymph Didi-Huberman marks an alignment and resonance that is expressed in the slow detachment of body and cloth, of nudity and that which envelopes it – a subtraction with remainder. What remains, Didi-Huberman argues, is drapery itself, a piece of clothing that has slid to the ground, a rag, arriving finally at the runnels of the modern European city. From Moholy-Nagy's *Trottoirs* up to the folds in felt by Robert Morris, (fig. 6, fig. 7) they all embody – and here Didi-Huberman refers to Deleuze – the possibility inherent to art of positing form as folded. In a nutshell, the *clinamen* implicit to matter would already have instigated the subversion and decline of ideal forms, a decline that does not lead to the negation of form, but to another conception of form, namely, to form as folded.³²

31 Cf. Warburg 1893.

32 Deleuze 1993a, 35; Cf. Didi-Huberman 2006, 135.



Fig. 4: Tizian, "Bacchanal", 1518/19, oil on canvas, 175 cm x 193 cm, Madrid, Museo del Prado.



Fig. 5: Nicolas Poussin, "The triumph of Pan", 1636, oil on canvas, 138 cm x 157 cm, London, National Gallery.



Fig. 6: László Moholy-Nagy, "Rinnstein", 1925, gelatin silver print, 28,9 cm x 20,8 cm.



Fig. 7: Robert Morris, "Untitled (Emmèlement, Tangle)", 1967, felt, New York, Museum of Modern Art.

With Didi-Huberman we took a glimpse at the folds within painting, at the double decline of the nymph and drapery, a fall that ends, as we have seen, in the runnels of Modernity.³³ With Deleuze we once again rewind Didi-Huberman's movie on folds and veer a little from the path undertaken: we swerve from the fold in painting to the painting as a folded tableau. With the folded tableau (*tableau ployant*) I refer to a notion introduced by Hubert Damisch to express the formal – folded – structure of the *Baroque Narcisse*.³⁴ (fig. 8) The painting in question is characterized by a horizontal fold, which divides the plane of the picture into a lower and an upper half. Both as connecting and as separating the two halves, the operation of the fold thus encompasses the folded totality of the plane as such. Years before Damisch's notion of the folded tableau found its way into art history discourse, Deleuze, similarly though in less detail, described the operation of an internal pictorial fold characteristic of otherwise incomparable Baroque painters such as El Greco and Tintoretto. Looking at El Greco's *The Burial of Count Orgaz* (fig. 9) Deleuze focuses on the horizontal line splitting/duplicating the painting into a lower and an upper half; in the lower half "bodies are pressed leaning against each other," while in the upper half "a soul rises along a thin fold, attended by saintly monads, each with its own spontaneity."³⁵

33 Didi-Huberman 2006, 31.

34 Damisch 1996, 33.

35 Deleuze 1993a, 30.



Fig. 8: Michelangelo Merisi Caravaggio, "Narcissus", 1608–1610, oil on canvas, 113 cm x 97 cm, Rome, Palazzo Corsini, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica.



Fig. 9: El Greco, "The burial of Count Orgaz", oil on canvas, 1586–1588, 480 cm x 360 cm, Toledo, Santo Tomé.

In Tintoretto's *Last Judgment* Deleuze detects the same operation of splitting/duplicating the totality of the pictorial plane into a lower and an upper half and as such constituting its totality (fig. 10):

“In Tintoretto the lower level shows bodies tormented by their own weight, their souls stumbling, bending and falling into the meanders of matter; the upper half acts like a powerful magnet that attracts them, makes them ride astride the yellow folds of light, folds of fire bringing their bodies alive, dizzying them, but with a dizziness from on high (un vertige du haut): thus are the two halves of the Last Judgment.”³⁶

In alignment with Heinrich Wölfflin, Deleuze characterized the world of the Baroque as extended across two axes – “a deepening toward the bottom, and a thrust toward the upper regions” – the first physical, concerning bodies in their materiality, the second metaphysical, concerning souls and their freedom.³⁷ Both are separated and, at the same time, held together by one and the same operation: the operation of folding.



Fig. 10: Jacopo Tintoretto (copy after), “Last judgement”, 17th century, oil on canvas, Venice, Museo Correr.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid, 29.

V) The Baroque house of thought

In the context of Deleuzian thought the fold is considered, first and foremost, in its operative function. Attention is granted to the manner by which certain relations are articulated, the relations between: top and bottom, inside and outside, material and immaterial and others. The meaning of the fold transcends its phenomenological manifestations and reaches into the realms of mathematics, physics, epistemology and metaphysics. In Deleuze's reading, the fold affords a path towards a different concept of thinking and an equally altered concept of the world as such; a world affected, compressed and curved by the interplay of forces and matter.³⁸ As previously suggested, the fold is the thread along which Deleuze proceeds through the labyrinth of the Leibnizian legacy. A legacy that folds or rather doubles over splitting itself into two infamous labyrinths, as Leibniz says: "one is the great question of *freedom and necessity* [...]; the other is the debate on *continuity and indivisible things* [...]." ³⁹ Drawing on Leibniz bipartite differentiation, Deleuze's allegory of the Baroque house of thought likewise presents itself as a diptych. It depicts the division of one house into two floors, a lower and an upper one. The labyrinthine continuum of matter and its constituents is located on the lower floor, while the labyrinth of the soul is located on the upper floor. Contrary to the Platonic distinction between two worlds, in contrast also to the model of ascension in the neoplatonic tradition, the Baroque house of thought knows only one world with two floors, separated and held together by a single fold "that echoes itself, arching from the two sides according to a different order. It expresses [...] the transformation of the cosmos into a mundus."⁴⁰

In and between the two floors everything is happening according to the operations of the fold. The connection/separation between the two in itself is produced through folding. The fold, as both the inner folds of the soul (*plis*) and the outer pleats of matter (*replis*), marks their difference *and* their oneness, marks their differential affiliation with one and the same world. The world depicted as the common house of matter and soul, is thus made up of two infinite series of folds, one series unfolding – realizing – the pleats of matter, the other one unfolding – actualizing – the folds of the soul. I will later touch on just how realization belongs to matter and actualization belongs to the soul, while the subject of actualization and realization is the virtual. Within Deleuze's thought, the virtual is the domain of the ideal or problematic. Already in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze adopts the notion of the fold as expressing the relation between the virtual with its actualization and realization in terms of implication, explication and complication. The virtual – in the following quote designated as chaos – implicates the genetic elements, which will eventually be by explicated, i.e., actualized and realized. Deleuze writes:

38 Ibid, 45

39 Leibniz 1985, § 189.

40 Deleuze 1993a, 29.

“The trinity complication-explication-implication accounts for the totality of the system – in other words, the chaos which contains all, the divergent series which lead out and back in, and the differentiator [the fold] which relates them one to another. Each series explicates or develops itself, but in its difference from the other series, which it implicates and which implicates it, which it envelops and which envelops it; in this chaos which complicates everything. The totality of the system, the unity of the divergent series as such, corresponds to the objectivity of a problem.”⁴¹

Within the trinity of complication-explication-implication the infinite curve of the world is set at play: “*The world is the infinite curve that touches at an infinity of points an infinity of curves [...]*”.⁴² And the whole world – thus the important addition – is “enclosed in the soul from one point of view”.⁴³ Nevertheless, and this should become clear in what follows, the virtual, its actualization and realization are not to be understood as reciprocally exclusive, but as strictly complementary. Before entering the discussion on their mutual unfolding, let us first take a closer look at Leibniz’s concepts of the labyrinth of the continuum of matter and the labyrinth of freedom in the souls, each on its own terms and in relation to the fold.

(i) The external folds (*replis*) of matter

It is specifically in reference to the labyrinth of the continuum of matter that Leibniz refers most explicitly to the fold, as in *Pacidius to Philaletes*, a text dating back to 1676 that deals with the problem of the continuum in its physical sense. Initially, the atomists’ radical solution, as well as Descartes’s definition of matter in terms of extension, is left aside.⁴⁴ In contrast to the microscopic discontinuity that underlies the sense-based experience of continuous matter as postulated by the atomists, Leibniz allows only for gradual differences, both in relation to the divisibility of material bodies and their motion.

41 Deleuze 1994, 123–4.

42 Deleuze 1993a, 24.

43 Ibid.

44 Despite the broad spectrum of divergent points of view characterizing early modern atomism, itself referring back to the renaissance of the notion of atomism in antiquity, and especially to the rediscovery of Lucretius, a general affirmation of the composition of complex bodies out of naturally indivisible material atoms, can be asserted. While Leibniz sympathized with such a conception of the body in his early physics, in his later physics he insisted on its incompatibility with his general understanding of the natural world. A similar development can be diagnosed in regard to Leibniz’s account of the mechanical philosophy of his time. While a certain sympathetic affiliation with the new mechanical philosophy and its aim to explain all natural phenomena in terms of matter and motion prevails throughout his work, his later physics should at the same time be read as a thorough critique of the mechanistic tradition. Cf. McDonough 2014, ch. 2.

Instead of a cluster of primary indivisible particles, the fold as a relevant concept enters the discussion; instead of a perfectly solid or perfectly fluid body, there appears an elastic yet resistant body.

“I myself admit neither Gassendi’s atoms, i.e. a body that is perfectly solid, nor Descartes subtle matter, i.e. a body that is perfectly fluid [...] the division of the continuum must not be considered to be like the division of sand into grains, but like that of a sheet of paper or tunic into folds [...]. It is just as if we suppose a tunic to be scored with folds multiplied to infinity in such a way that there is no fold so small that it is not subdivided by a new fold: and yet in this way no point in the tunic will be assignable without it being moved in different directions by its neighbors, although it will not be torn apart by them. And the tunic cannot be said to be resolved all the way down into points; instead, although some folds are smaller than other to infinity, bodies are always extended and points never become parts, but always remain mere extrema.”⁴⁵

Neither perfectly solid, nor perfectly fluid, Leibniz conceives of matter as an elastic, continuous and endlessly folded texture. Folded into ever-smaller folds, matter does not ever break down into primary atomic constituents, nor is its cohesion (tension and release) ever lost. Matter thus constitutes an infinite continuum, wherein “no point [...] will be assignable without it being moved in different directions by its neighbors, although it will not be torn apart by them.”⁴⁶ Contrary to the atomists’ hypothesis, matter is thus perceived as indecomposable into primary particles. Matter rather forms a variety of masses according to the motion and the forces active in and between its folds. This takes us into Leibniz’s complicated ontology of forces. Although this is not the place to give a detailed account of it, a few basic remarks are inevitable to shed some light on the terms which Deleuze uses to identify two basic types of forces: an *elastic-compressing force* responsible for the accumulation of matter along its outer, inorganic pleats, and a *plastic force*, responsible for the organization of matter along its inner, organic pleats.⁴⁷

Leibniz’s critique of atomism led, as we have seen, to a conception of material bodies as irreducibly elastic and infinitely divided into ever-smaller folds. The material world is thus conceived as a worldwide net of ever-smaller folds. In and between the worldwide

45 In: Leibniz 2001, 185, in the English translation, the word “extrema” is used, while Leibniz uses “Grenzen”. Cf. Leibniz 1676, 145.

46 Leibniz 2001, 185.

47 This diagrammatical sketch is developed in the 1st chapter of *The fold*. See Deleuze 1993a, 3–13.

net of material folds, different forces are at play. Leibniz divides them into passive and active, into primitive and derivative. He writes:

“Active force is twofold, that is, either *primitive*, which is inherent in every corporeal substance *per se* [...] or *derivative*, which, resulting from a limitation of primitive force through the collision of bodies with one another, for example, is found in different degrees. Indeed, primitive force (which is nothing but the first entelechy) corresponds to the *soul* or *substantial form*. [...] Similarly, passive force is also twofold, either primitive or derivative. And indeed, the *primitive force of being acted upon* [*vis primitiva patiendi*] or of resisting constitutes that which is called *primary matter* in the schools, if correctly interpreted. This force is that by virtue of which it happens that a body cannot be penetrated by another body, but presents an obstacle to it, and at the same time is endowed with a certain laziness, so to speak, that is, an opposition to motion, nor, further, does it allow itself to be put into motion without somewhat diminishing the force of the body acting on it. As a result, the *derivative force of being acted upon* later shows itself to different degrees in *secondary matter*.”⁴⁸

In what follows the passage quoted above, the two facets of an active force are spelled out as an elementary *dead force* (*vis mortua*) restricted to the initiation of motion and an ordinary *live force* (*vis viva*) joined with actual motion.⁴⁹ As examples of dead forces Leibniz lists: the centrifugal force, the force of heaviness and the force that restores a stretched elastic body back to its original state. The living force is assigned to the impact arising from the fall of heavy bodies. Passive forces, contrary to active force, are related to the resistance to motion: “a force [...], an inclination to retain its [a thing’s] state, and so to resist changing.”⁵⁰ In what concerns the difference between primitive and derivative forces, the primitive active force is assigned to the soul or substantial form, while the primitive passive force is assigned to primary matter. Together they complete a corporeal substance. The derivative forces, on the other hand, are those commonly investigated by physicists analyzing size, shape and motion of natural phenomena in as far as they satisfy certain laws.⁵¹ In Leibniz’s opinion, only with regard to primitive forces – that is with regard to the primary activity of the soul or substantial form – an escape from the dead ends of mechanistic reductionism is imminent. Leibniz’s critique of the mechanistic

48 Leibniz, *Specimen Dynamicum* (1695). In: Leibniz 1849–63, vol. VI, 236–7; Leibniz 1989, 119–20.

49 Ibid, 238; 290.

50 Leibniz, *Letter to de Volder* (March 24th/April 3rd, 1699). In: Leibniz 1965a, vol. II, 170; Leibniz 1989, 172.

51 Leibniz, *Specimen Dynamicum* (1695). In: Leibniz 1849–63, vol. VI, 237; Leibniz 1989, 120.

approach does not lead to its negation, but to a reconsideration of its limits. As Leibniz puts it in *Discourse on Metaphysics*:

“Although all particular phenomena of nature can be explained mathematically or mechanically by those who understand them, nevertheless the general principles of corporeal nature and of mechanics itself are more metaphysical than geometrical, and belong to some indivisible forms or natures as the causes of appearances, rather than to corporeal mass or extension.”⁵²

As long as we move from fold to fold along the creases introduced by derivative forces and explained by mathematics and mechanics according to Leibniz we will ultimately be restricted to perceive the unfolding of the world only in mathematical and mechanical terms and thus miss its real nature. Let me try to make this point as clear as possible: Leibniz holds on to the hypothesis that matter forms an infinite continuum and consequently denies the existence of any final indivisible point, which would allow us to determine the limits of a specific body or motion. Then, the question arises: in what way should a discernable unity within the infinite multiplicity of matter and motion be conceived. For Leibniz the specific unities of matter and motion point, as we have seen, to “some indivisible forms or natures”, transcending the mathematical and mechanical realm.⁵³

With this in mind we can return to Deleuze and his differentiation between elastic-compressing forces as assigned to the accumulation of matter along its outer, inorganic pleats and his so called plastic forces, assigned to the organization of matter along its inner, organic pleats. Both the elastic-compressing forces and the plastic forces must be conceived as derivative forces in Leibniz’s sense. In Deleuze’s reading of Leibniz one and the same worldwide net of material folds is thus developed along two complementary lines: under the influence of elastic-compressing forces, matter, as a mass, forms external folds that encompass an *outer milieu*. The outer milieu may be considered inorganic, to an extent. Subject to plastic forces, matter, as an organism, forms inner folds that encompass an *inner milieu*. The inner milieu may be considered organic, to an extent. ‘To an extent’ means that there is no difference in essence between the inner and the outer, between that which is organic and that which is inorganic, but only “a difference

52 Leibniz, *Discourse* (1686). In: Leibniz 1965a, vol. IV, 444; Leibniz 1989, 51–2.

53 Deleuze certainly follows Leibniz’s anti-mechanical trend, by pushing it towards a different end: a mechanism for Deleuze is no longer faulty “for being too artificial to account for living matter, but for not being mechanical enough, for not being adequately machined.” Deleuze 1993a, 8.

of vector”.⁵⁴ Leibniz himself uses the images of a garden full of plants or a pond full of fish to express the intertwined logic of inside and outside, organic and inorganic: “Every portion of matter may be conceived as a garden full of plants, and as a pond full of fish. But every branch of each plant, every member of each animal, and every drop of their liquid parts is in itself likewise a similar garden or pond.”⁵⁵ An organic inside is thus inhabiting an inorganic outside, as in the image of fish in a pond, while each fish in itself is once again a host to a throng of living being and thus functions as the outside to the latter. “The inorganic folds,” as Deleuze puts it, “move between two organic folds. For Leibniz, as for the Baroque, the principles of reason are veritable cries: Not everything is fish, but fish are teeming everywhere.”⁵⁶

Matter, located on the bottom floor of the Baroque house of thought, thus, turned out to be folded into masses and organisms, into accumulations and living beings, into outer and inner milieus, according to the interplay of elastic-compressing and plastic forces. Recall that both the elastic-compressive and the plastic forces were considered derivative forces and as such insufficient to account for the unity of corporeal bodies and motion. For Leibniz, the unity of corporeal bodies and the unity of motion, necessarily point to another “higher inner and individualizing entity,”⁵⁷ to the reign of primitive forces and hence to the labyrinth of the soul.

(ii) The internal folds (*plis*) of the soul

Changing floor, traversing from the labyrinth of matter to the labyrinth of the soul, implies a shift from Leibniz’s physics towards his metaphysics. With the introduction of primitive forces, this shift is already noted. Just as his physics, Leibniz’s metaphysics too can be divided into an early and a late period. The early period is generally regarded as reaching from Leibniz’s youth to the *Discourse on Metaphysics* (1686), while the late period is generally considered to expand from the *New System* (1695) to the theory of monads developed since then.⁵⁸ The theory of monads constitutes the main focus of the following remarks. Since its very first articulation, Leibniz’s theory of monads has provoked a wide range of interpretations, trying to come to terms with the unseizable description of the monad as a

54 Ibid, 8. In its genealogy the concept of milieu can be traced back to 18th century biology. From then on it played a fundamental role in the historically diverging conceptions of the living individual in relation to its environment. In *A thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari mainly refer to Jakob v. Uexküll and Gilbert Simondon to further elaborate on a contemporary concept of the milieu. See Deleuze/Guattari 1987, especially the chap. titled *The Geology of Morals*, 39–75.

55 Leibniz 1965b, § 67.

56 Deleuze 1993a, 9.

57 Ibid.

58 For an introduction to Leibniz’s early and late metaphysics see Mercer/Sleigh 1994; Rutherford 1994.

simple, soul-like substance, unextended, without parts and without windows,⁵⁹ and more generally, with the integration of the theory of monads within Leibniz's account of matter and the interplay of body and soul.⁶⁰ In *The fold* Deleuze provides a seminal reading of Leibniz's theory of the monads. Within the limits of this paper neither Leibniz's original theory nor Deleuze's interpretation can be developed to their full extent. I would rather restrict myself to stressing the foundational role that Leibniz assigns to the substance as a principle of force and of true unity and to sketching its relation to the concept of the fold. To be sure, Leibniz's notion of the monad as unextended, soul-like substance implies a radical reconceptualization of the notion of substance as such. As we have seen above, Leibniz saw it necessary to reintroduce the notion of substantial forms in order to account for the unity of corporeal bodies and of motion. The reintroduction of substantial forms does not come without a transformation of substance in terms of forces. Leibniz writes: "[...] it was necessary to restore, and, as it were, to rehabilitate the *substantial forms* [...], but in a way that would render them intelligible, and separate the use one should make of them from the abuse that has been made of them. I found then that their nature consists in force, [...]."⁶¹ It is due to this de-substantialization of the substance in terms of forces that Deleuze characterizes Leibniz (and the Baroque in general) as exchanging the hyle-morphic model for the material-force model.⁶²

Following Deleuze, I will from now on traverse a path, which according to him connects the three essential phases defining the internal folds of the soul, from *inflection* to the *point of position* (or *point of view*) and from the latter to the *envelope of inherence* (or *inhesion*).⁶³ (fig. 11)

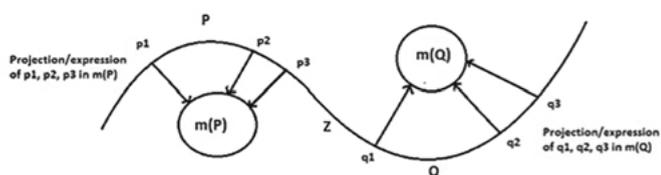


Fig. 11: Point of inflection (Z), point of view (P, Q), point of inclusion (m(P), m(Q)).

59 Cf. Leibniz 1965b, § 1 and § 7.

60 Cf. Rutherford 1994, 124. Bredekamp 2008 offers an exceptional reading of Leibniz and the windows of the monad.

61 Leibniz, *New System* (1695). In: Leibniz 1965a, vol. IV, 478–79; Leibniz 1989, 139.

62 Cf. Deleuze 1993a, 35.

63 Cf. Deleuze 1993a, 20–22. The corresponding French and German terms are: *point d'inflexion/Inflexionspunkt, point de vue/Gesichtspunkt* and *enveloppe d'inhérence, d'inhésion/Hülle der Inhärenz, Inhäsion*. Cf. Deleuze 1988a, 28–31.

Before doing so, let me briefly address a more general question: what do the *internal folds* of the soul stand for? Recall the partition into an upper and a bottom floor that characterizes the Baroque house of thought. On the bottom floor we posited the labyrinth of matter, on the upper floor the labyrinth of the soul. In reference to Leibniz and his description of the monad as simple substance without windows, Deleuze depicts the upper floor as some kind of “dark room or chamber decorated only with a stretched canvas ‘diversified by folds,’ as if it were a living dermis.”⁶⁴ Though unextended, without parts and without windows, the unity of substance is in itself diversified. Leibniz describes the internal diversification as “a multiplicity within the unity of the simple substance”, as a “plurality of states and of relationships”, consisting in nothing else but “what we call perception”.⁶⁵ “And that is all that can be found in a simple substance –”, Leibniz continues, “perceptions and changes of perceptions [appetition].”⁶⁶ According to Leibniz the perceptions placed on the opaque canvas of the soul, represent an innate form of knowledge; Deleuze on his part describes them in terms of ideal events. Now, what is an ideal event? According to Deleuze an ideal event is a set of singularities, mathematically speaking, a set of singular points that characterize a curve.⁶⁷ In the terminology of *The fold* the ideal event corresponds to the point of inflection. A second distinguishing point between Leibniz and Deleuze should be emphasized: while according to Leibniz a pre-established harmony precedes individual substances, for Deleuze no such harmony could be supposed. For Deleuze a pre-individual field is thought to precede the individual, namely, the virtual. It is once more in analogy to mathematics, more precisely, in analogy to the mathematical concept of a manifold that Deleuze specifies the notion of the virtual as a pure *Many*, as a purely disjunctive diversity.⁶⁸ In order for the ideal event to pass from a state of mere virtuality into actuality and reality, it must be actualized by the soul and realized by matter. Having made this point, we can now return to the figure introduced above. The point of inflection (Z) designates the formative force, the ideal event of the fold – the singularities of perception. The points of view (P), (Q) designate the vectors of curvature (p), (q), which indicate the direction of concavity and stand for a place, a site or a position – the appetite that leads the perceptions to change. Lastly, the points of inclusion $m(P)$, $m(Q)$ designate what insists in the point of view: the soul or the subject as “an envelope of inherence or of unilateral ‘inhesion.’”⁶⁹ Inclusion, inherence or inhesion, Deleuze argues, “is the final cause of the fold”.⁷⁰ Deleuze’s line of thought thus becomes apparent: instead of starting off with the soul or subject, he starts from the event of the fold, as the formative force giving rise to a series of subsequent transfor-

64 Deleuze 1993a, 4. Cf. Leibniz 1996, II, chap. 12, 114ff.

65 Leibniz 1965b, § 13 and § 14.

66 Ibid. § 18.

67 Cf. Deleuze 1969, 67.

68 Deleuze 1993a, 76.

69 Ibid, 41.

70 Ibid.

mations. Infinitely many points of views are generated by infinitely many events of folding, transforming concavity to convexity and vice versa, points of view, which than figure as points of position for a soul or subject to envelop. Nevertheless, the process which I have delineated cannot be conceived as one-directional, for “why would something be folded, if it were not to be enveloped, wrapped, or put into something else?”⁷¹

Let me linger a while longer on inflection itself. In Deleuze’s terms inflection was defined as the ideal event happening to the infinite curve of the world, such that the “*infinite curve that touches at an infinity of points an infinity of curves*”⁷² must be considered the ever-unfinished product of the events of inflection. At the heart of these considerations is the notion of a thoroughly eventful world, within which every inflection becomes the locus of a new fold, pushing the variation towards infinity: “That is how we go from fold to fold and not from point to point, and how every contour is blurred to give definition to the formal powers of the raw material, which rise to the surface and are put forward as so many detours and supplementary folds.”⁷³ According to Deleuze every inflection is to be considered a variation pulverizing the entire world into an infinite number of ever-smaller folds. But the pulverization of the world does not come without the folds simultaneously exceeding themselves or finding their finality in an inclusion.⁷⁴ What formerly seemed an end result to the process of unfolding – the soul or subject – is, then, at the same instance designated the final cause of folding. Nevertheless, between the process of unfolding and the inherence of the soul or subject an essential gap or asymmetry is present, an asymmetry between the virtuality of the event of folding (point of inflection) and the actuality of inherence (point of inclusion). “What is folded”, Deleuze concludes, “is the included, the inherent,” furthermore “it can be stated that what is folded is only virtual and currently exists only in an envelope, in something that envelops it.”⁷⁵ By enveloping the infinite curve of the world, the soul or subject actualizes it. But something is still missing to complete the picture we have been drawing: realization as belonging to matter. In a nutshell, the Leibnizian-Deleuzian allegory of the Baroque house of thought is to be considered a single virtual, infinitely curved plane, actualized by the souls or subjects on the upper floor and realized by matter on the bottom floor. Rather than maintaining a horizontal divide, a suitable image for the Leibnizian-Deleuzian allegory would be one that folds one floor on top of the other into a single plane. Every fold of this plane would constitute a thin membrane alongside which the infinite outside of the continuum of matter and the essential enclosure or finitude of every actual being touch upon each other, actualizing and realizing the infinite potential of the virtual plane.

71 Ibid, 22.

72 Ibid, 24.

73 Ibid, 17.

74 Cf. *ibid.*

75 Ibid.

VI) The inside of the outside

What does thinking in folds ultimately imply? It implies a philosophy of the event and a corresponding theory of differentiation and individuation. The differentiated and the individuated are no longer conceived as miraculously presupposed or as deduced from some kind of ideal form, but as the actualization and realization of a common virtual plane. Whatever appears in front of our eyes necessarily presents itself to us as that which has already been actualized and realized, as that which has already been differentiated and individuated, as that which has already been unfolded. To a degree, the process of differentiation and individuation – the process of unfolding – will always be buried beneath some assumed form; that is to say, the process itself is always in danger of being covered by its own products and thus of being overlooked.⁷⁶ The differentiated will inevitably present itself to us in a certain form and as having certain qualities, which necessarily veil its initially formless and unqualified intensities: “In brief, we know intensity only in the extended fold and the object veiled in qualities.”⁷⁷ By analogy with Paul Klee, for whom the creative forces themselves cannot be named, differentiation can be said to remain unnamable to an extent.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, as Klee continues, the creative forces do reveal themselves and have to be revealed in the known types of matter, just as the curved line reveals itself as a trace of the virtual intensities preceding its actual form. In reference to Henri-Louis Bergson, Deleuze considers the virtual plane to involve the entire past – not only the past conserved in the actual form, and the future that will at some point be actualized, but also a past that was never present, and a future that will never become present.⁷⁹

Following in Derrida’s footsteps we have initially posited the fold as another exemplary figure of the logic of the supplement expressed in the syntactical form of “neither/nor, that is, simultaneously either/or”.⁸⁰ Like Derrida’s doubly-folded words, which subvert the binary order characteristic of western metaphysics from within the metaphysical text itself, the fold has been shown to unsettle the dichotomies between now and then, veiling and unveiling, difference and identity, organic and inorganic, matter and soul, virtuality, actuality and reality. The intimate duplicity of folding – “a severing, by which each term casts the other forwards, a tension by which each fold is pulled into the other”⁸¹ – unsettles the very foundation of ontology as such, namely the spatial, temporal and normative order of being as presence. For both Deleuze and Derrida – choosing different points

76 Cf. Deleuze 1994, 281.

77 Ibid, 282–283.

78 In *Die Kraft des Schöpferischen* Klee states: “Die Kraft des Schöpferischen bleibt letzten Endes geheimnisvoll. [The creative forces ultimately remain inexplicable.]”, Klee 1956, 17.

79 Cf. Deleuze 1994, 82ff.

80 Derrida 1981b, 43.

81 Deleuze 1993a, 30.

of view, using different conceptual tools and arriving at different conclusions – thinking in folds amounts to an ontological revolution or rather to a substitution of the logic of being for a logic of difference. With his notion of differentiation Deleuze substitutes the Platonic concept of a pure being-without-becoming for a pure becoming-without-being. With the notion of *différance* Derrida substitutes the ontological question “what is?” for an affirmation of the trace of a radical alterity, subverting both ontology’s interrogative form and the authority of presence and identity underlying it. Deleuze’s differentiation, as much as Derrida’s *différance*, are to be conceived the other to “all that is”. But the other can no longer be located simply beyond or outside “what is” – for if it were the case, a mere inversion would once again put the order of being upside down, while still maintaining the same ontological frame. In order to poke a hole into the frame itself, in order to open it up for “all that is not”, the other or outside must be conceived as insisting within all the folds and foldings which together make up this or that inside: “they are not something other than the outside, but precisely the inside *of* the outside.”⁸²

82 Deleuze 1988b, 97.

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Angelika Seppi

Email: angelika.seppi@hu-berlin.de

Image Knowledge Gestaltung. An Interdisciplinary Laboratory.
Cluster of Excellence Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.
Sophienstrasse 22a, 10178 Berlin, Germany.