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The Fold
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GILLES DELEUZE

The Fold*

MATERIAL COILS[1]

The Baroque does not refer to an essence, but rather to an operative function, to a characteristic. It endlessly creates folds. It does not invent the thing: there are all the folds that come from the Orient—Greek, Roman, Romanesque, Gothic, classical folds. . . . But it twists and turns the folds, takes them to infinity, fold upon fold, fold after fold. The characteristic of the Baroque is the fold that goes on to infinity. And from the beginning it differentiates them along two lines, according to two infinities, as if the infinite had two levels: the coils of matter, and the folds in the soul. Below, matter is amassed according to an initial type of fold, then organized according to a second type, insofar as its parts constitute organs "differently folded and more or less developed."[2] Above, the soul sings the glory of God by running along its own folds, though without succeeding in entirely developing them, "for they reach into the infinite." ("Monadology," § 61, in *Philosoph-*

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1. Deleuze distinguishes, not entirely consistently, between the "replis" of inorganic matter and the "plis" of the organic. "Pli" and "repli" both have a primary meaning of "fold" and are otherwise largely synonymous, although the form of the latter suggests an idea of repetition. An introverted person is furthermore said to be "replié sur soi," and the word "repli" consequently has a connotation of turning inward, or invagination. To maintain a distinction in English, I have translated "pli" as "fold" and "repli" as "coil," since the latter evokes the movements of a reptile (referred to in French as replis but not plis), the idea of folding in on oneself and the springs [*ressorts*] which Deleuze says underlie Leibnizian matter. —Translator's note.

2. "A New System of the Nature and the Communication of Substances," § 7, in Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, vol. 2 trans. and ed. and introduction by Leroy E. Loemker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 743. Hereafter cited in the text.

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ical Papers and Letters, 1055, and cf., also "The Principles of Nature and of Grace Based On Reason," § 13, 1040–41). A labyrinth is said to be multiple, etymologically, because it has many folds. The multiple is not merely that which has many parts, but that which is folded in many ways. Each level corresponds perfectly to a labyrinth: the labyrinth of the coextensive content of matter and its parts, the labyrinth of liberty in the soul and its predicates ("On Freedom," vol. 1, 404–10). If Descartes was unable to reconcile them, it is because, unaware of the soul's inclination and the curvature of matter, he tried to find content's secret running along straight lines and liberty's secret in a rectitude of the soul. A "cryptography" is needed which would both enumerate nature and decipher the soul, see into the coils of matter and read in the folds of the soul.[3]

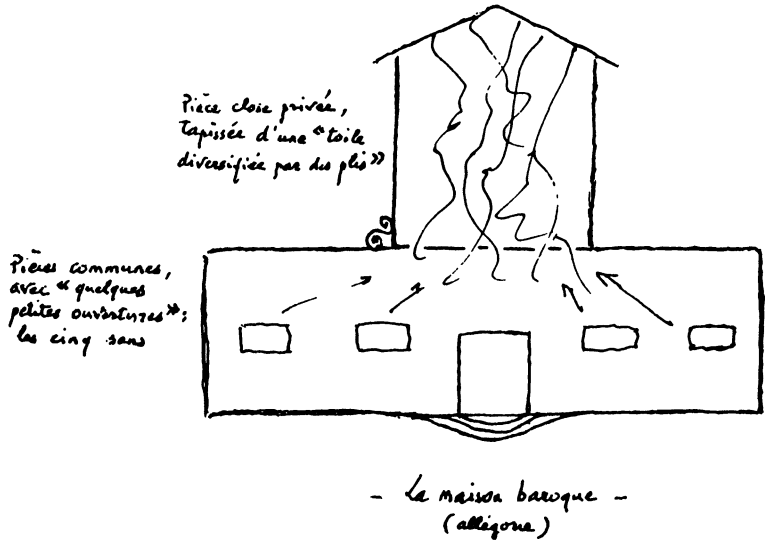
It is certain that there is communication between the two levels (which is why content rises up into the soul). There are souls below—animal, open to sensation—or even bottom levels in souls, and the coils of matter surround them, envelop them. When we discover that souls can have no windows to the outside, we will need, at least at first, to think of this in reference to the souls above, the rational souls, which have risen to the other level ("elevation"). It is the upper level which has no window: a darkened compartment or study, furnished only with a stretched cloth "diversified by folds," like the bottom layer of skin exposed. These folds, ropes, or springs set up on the opaque cloth represent innate knowledge, but an innate knowledge which passes into action when called upon by matter. For the latter unleashes the "vibrations or oscillations" at the lower extremity of the ropes by means of "small openings" which do exist on the lower level. It is a great Baroque apparatus which Leibniz sets up between the lower level, pierced by windows, and the upper story, sealed and sightless but in return resonant, like a sounding box which would render audible the visible movements coming from below.[4] It will be objected that this text is not an expression of Leibniz's thought, but rather the limit of his

3. On cryptography as the "art of inventing the key to an enveloped thing," cf., Fragment "De Arte Combinatoria" in *Opuscules et fragments inédits de Leibniz: Extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Royale de Hanovre*, ed. Louis Couturat (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1934), 563; John Locke, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, ed. and trans. Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), vol. 4, chap. 17, § 8: the coils of Nature and the "abstracts [*abrégés*]." Hereafter cited in the text.

4. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *New Essays*, 144–45. In this book, Leibniz "reworks" Locke's *Essays;* the darkened compartment has been referred to by Locke, but not the folds. Hereafter cited in the text.

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possible agreement with Locke. That does not hinder it in the least from offering a way of representing what Leibniz will continually assert: a correspondence, even a communication between the two levels, between the two labyrinths, between the coils of matter and the folds in the soul. A fold between the two folds? And the same image—of veins of marble—is applied to both in different contexts; sometimes the veins are the twisted coils of matter which surround the living beings caught in a block, so that a bank of marble is like an undulating lake full of fish. Sometimes the veins are the innate ideas in the soul, like the bent figures or the potential statues caught in a block of marble. Matter is marbled, and the soul is marbled, in two different ways.



The Baroque House—(allegory)

[diagram: a closed, private room, draped with a 'cloth diversified by folds' / common rooms with 'a few small openings': the five senses]

Wölfflin has noted a certain number of material characteristics of the Baroque: the horizontal extension of the bottom sections, the lowering of the pediment, the forward movement of low, curved steps; the treatment of matter by masses or aggregates, the rounding off of angles and the avoidance of straight lines, the substitution of the rounded acanthus for the jagged acanthus, the use of travertine to produce spongy, cavernous forms, or the elaboration of a whorl that feeds endlessly on new turbulences and ends only in the way a horse's mane or wavefroth does; the tendency of matter to overflow space, to

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be reconciled with fluidity, at the same time that the waters themselves divide into masses.[5]

It is Huyghens who develops a Baroque mathematical physics whose object is the curve. And with Leibniz, the curvature of the universe extends in accordance with three other fundamental notions: the fluidity of matter, the elasticity of bodies, the spring as mechanism. In the first place, it is certain that matter would not of itself move in a curved line: it would follow the tangent (Preface to the *New Essays*). But the universe is, as it were, compressed by an active force which gives a curvilinear or swirling movement to matter, following to its end a curve with no tangent. And the infinite division of matter means that the compressive force relates each portion of matter to its surroundings, to the surrounding parts which bathe and penetrate the body in question, determining its curvature. Ceaselessly dividing, the parts of matter form little swirls within a swirl, and in them there are other, smaller ones, and still more in the concave intervals of the swirls which touch one another. Matter thus offers a texture that is infinitely porous, that is spongy or cavernous without empty parts, since there is always a cavern in the cavern: each body, however small it may be, contains a world insofar as it is perforated by uneven passageways, and the world, surrounded and penetrated by an increasingly subtle fluid, was like a "pond of matter in which there are different currents and waves" ("Letter to Des Billettes, December 1696," *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, vol. 2, 772). It is not, however, to be concluded that in the second place even the subtlest matter is perfectly fluid and losing thereby its texture, in accordance with a thesis that Leibniz attributes to Descartes. It is undoubtedly Descartes's mistake, which one finds in various areas, to have thought that the real distinction between parts entailed separability; what defines an absolute fluid is precisely the absence of coherence or cohesion, that is to say, the separability of the parts, which is only applicable to an abstract and passive matter (Leibniz, "Table de définitions," in *Opuscules et fragments*, 486. And *New Essays*, 2, chap. 23, § 23, 222–23). According to Leibniz, two truly distinct parts of matter can be inseparable, as is shown not only in the action of the surroundings—which determine the curvilinear movement of a body—but also by the ambient pressure, which determines its hardness (coherence, cohesion) or the inseparability of its parts. One would thus have to say that a body has a degree of hardness as well as a degree of fluidity, or that it is essentially elastic, the elastic force of

5. Cf., Heinrich Wölfflin, *Renaissance and Baroque*, trans. Katherine Simon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).

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bodies being the expression of the active compressive force which works on matter—once a boat reaches a certain speed, a wave becomes as hard as a marble wall. The atomistic hypothesis of an absolute hardness and the Cartesian hypothesis of an absolute fluidity converge all the more easily because they share the same error, positing separable minima, either in the form of finite bodies, or, infinitely, in the form of points (the Cartesian line as the site of these points, the punctual analytic equation).

This is what Leibniz sets forth in an extraordinary text: a flexible or elastic body still has coherent parts which form a fold, with the result that they do not separate into parts of parts, but rather divide infinitely into smaller and smaller folds that always retain a certain cohesion. What is more, the labyrinth of continuity is not a line which would dissolve into independent points, like sand flowing in grains, but is like a piece of fabric or a sheet of paper which divides into an infinite number of folds or disintegrates into curved movements, each one determined by the consistency or the participation of its setting. "The division of the continuous ought not to be considered as that of sand into grains, but as that of a sheet of paper or of a tunic into folds, in such a way that there can be an infinite number of folds, one smaller than the next, without the body ever dissolving into points or minima" ("Placidius Philalethi," *Opuscules,* 614–15). Always a fold within the fold, like a cavern within the cavern. The unit of matter, the smallest element of the labyrinth, is the fold, not the point, which is never a part, but only an extremity of the line. That is why the parts of matter are masses or aggregates, as corollary to the compressive elastic force. The unfold is thus not the opposite of the fold, but follows one fold until the next. "Particles twisted into folds," and which a "contrary effort changes and changes again" ("Letter to Des Billettes," 773). Folds of the winds, of fire and the earth, and the subterranean folds of lodes in the mine. The solid creases of "natural geography" can be attributed to the initial action of fire, followed by that of the winds and waters on the earth in a system of complex interactions; and lodes are like the curves of conic sections, ending now in a circle or an ellipse, now extending into a hyperbola or a parabola.[6] Material science, the Japanese philosopher would say, has as its model "origami," or the art of the paper fold.

* * *

6. G. W. Leibniz, "Protogaea," *Opera Omnia,* ed. L. Dutens (Geneva: Fratres de Tournes, 1768), vol. 2.

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Monads "have no windows by which something might enter or leave them," they have "neither holes nor doors."[7] If we do not try to reach a precise understanding of the situation, we run the risk of understanding it too abstractly. A picture still has an external model, is still a window. The modern reader might call to mind a film shown in the dark, but the film was nonetheless shot. Is one then to imagine numerical images, that have no model, the products of a calculation? Or more simply, a line of infinite inflection, which works for a surface, as we find in the works of Pollock or Rauschenberg? It has in fact been said that with Rauschenberg the picture's surface is no longer a window onto the world but becomes an opaque table of information on which a numbered line is inscribed.[8] In place of the picture/window there is substituted tabulation, the table on which are inscribed lines, numbers, changing characters (object-matter).[9] Leibniz ceaselessly draws up linear and numerical tables with which to furnish the interior surfaces of the monad. In place of holes there are folds. Against the system window/countryside is opposed the pair city/information-table.[10] The Liebnizian monad would be such a table, or rather a room, an apartment entirely covered with lines of variable inflection. It would be the dark room of the *New Essays*, furnished with a stretched cloth diversified by moving, living folds. The essential point about the monad is that it is background: it draws everything from this, and nothing comes from outside and nothing goes outside.

In this respect, there is no need to refer to overly modern developments, except insofar as they aid in understanding what the Baroque enterprise already was. For a long time there have been places where what is on view is inside: the cell, the sacristy, the crypt, the church, the theater, the reading-room, or print collection. These are the places which the Baroque privileged in order to draw from them their power

7. Leibniz, *Monadology*, § 7; Letter to Princess Sophie, June 1700, *Philosophischen Schriften*, vol. 1, 554.

8. Leo Steinberg, *Other Criteria*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972): "the flatbed picture plane."

9. *Objectile* [object-matter] is a neologism apparently based on the model of *subjectile*, which means the material support, such as canvas, board, wall, that underlies a painting.—Translator's note.

10. On the Baroque city, and the importance of the city in the Baroque, cf., Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1938) and Severo Sarduy, "El Caravaggio / la ciudad barroco" in *Ensayos generales sobre el Barroco* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económico, 1987), 179–82.

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and glory. At first, the dark room has only a small, high opening, through which light enters, passing through two mirrors, the second of which is tilted to follow a page, onto which the light will project the unseen objects that are to be drawn.[11] Then come the transformational decors, painted skies, all types of *trompe-l'œil* which adorn walls: all the monad's furniture and objects are in *trompe-l'œil*. Finally, there is the architectural idea of a room in black marble, where light penetrates only through orifices so artfully twisted that they allow not the slightest glimpse of the outside but illuminate or color the decorations of a pure inside (is it not the Baroque spirit which, in this sense, inspires Le Corbusier in the La Tourette abbey?). It is impossible to understand the Leibnizian monad, and its system of light/mirror/point of view/interior decoration without relating them to Baroque architecture. The latter sets up chapels and chambers whose glancing light comes from openings invisible even to their inhabitants. One of its first acts is the Studiolo in Florence, with its secret, windowless room. The monad is a cell, more a sacristy than an atom: a room with neither door nor window, where all actions are internal.

The monad is the autonomy of the interior, an interior without exterior. Yet it has as a correlative the independence of the facade, an exterior without interior. It—the facade—can have doors and windows, it is full of holes, although there is no such thing as an empty space, a hole being nothing more than the site of a more subtle matter. The doors and windows of matter open and even close only from the outside and on the outside. Naturally, organic matter already suggests an interiorization, but a relative one, always in progress and never complete. Consequently, a fold runs through that which is living, but in such a way that it separates the absolute interiority of the monad and the infinite exteriority of matter respectively into the metaphysical principle of life and the physical law of phenomena. Two infinite sets which never meet: "The infinite division of exteriority extends endlessly and remains open, so that it is necessary to leave the exterior and posit a punctual, interior unity. . . . The realm of the physical, the natural, the phenomenal, the contingent is completely flung into the infinite iteration of open chains: in this respect it is not metaphysical. The realm of the metaphysical lies beyond, and brings a close to the iteration . . . the monad is that fixed point which infinite

11. Cf., "L'Usage de la chambre obscure" at Gravesande, in Sarah Kofman, *Camera obscura* (Paris: Galilée, 1973), 79–97.

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partitioning never attains and which closes off infinitely divided space."[12] Baroque architecture can be defined by that scission of the facade and the inside, of the interior and the exterior, the autonomy of the interior and the independence of the exterior effected in such a way that each one sets off the other. Wölfflin, too, said this in his own way, ("it is precisely the contrast between the aggravated language of the facade and the serene peacefulness of the interior which constitutes one of the most powerful effects that Baroque art has on us"), although he is wrong in thinking that the excess of interior decoration ultimately obscures the contrast, or that the absolute interior is peaceful in itself. Similarly, Jean Rousset defines the Baroque by the scission between the facade and the interior, although he too believes that its decoration risks "exploding" the interior. Still, the interior remains perfectly unified when viewed from the perspective or mirror imposed on the viewer by the decoration, however complicated. Between the interior and the exterior, between the spontaneity of the inside and the determination of the outside a new mode of correspondence is needed, one which was totally unknown to pre-Baroque architects: "What direct and necessary connection is there between the interior of Saint-Agnes and its facade? . . . Far from being adapted to the structure, the Baroque facade has a tendency to express nothing but itself," while, for its part, the interior falls back on itself, remains sealed, tends to offer itself to the viewer who discovers it in its entirety from a single viewpoint, as a "jewel-box in which the absolute resides."[13]

The new harmony will be made possible, first of all, by the distinction between the two stories, insofar as it resolves tension or distributes scission. It is the lower story which is charged with the facade, and which extends by puncturing itself, which curves back in accordance with the determinate coils of a heavy matter, thereby constituting an infinite reception room, or room of receptivity. It is the upper story that is closed, a pure interior without exterior, an interiority sealed in weightlessness, lined in spontaneous folds which are now only those of a soul or a spirit. Consequently, the Baroque world, as Wölfflin has shown, is organized according to two vectors: a sinking downward and an upward pull. It is Leibniz who permits the coexis-

12. Michel Serres, *Le système de Leibniz* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968), 762.

13. Jean Rousset, *La Littérature de l'âge baroque en France: Circé et le paon* (Paris: J. Corti, 1968), 168–71. And, by the same author, *L'Intérieur et l'extérieur* (Paris: J. Corti, 1976).

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tence of the heavy system's tendency to find its equilibrium at the lowest possible point, there where the sum of masses can descend no farther, with the tendency to rise, the highest aspiration of a weightless system, to that place where souls are destined to become reasonable, as in a painting by Tintoretto. The fact that one is metaphysical and concerns the soul, and that the other is physical and concerns bodies, does not prevent the two vectors from composing one and the same world, one and the same house. And not only are they separated off as functions of an ideal line actualized in one story and realized in the other, but a higher correspondence ceaselessly relates them to each other. This kind of house architecture is not a constant of art or thought. What is specifically Baroque is this distinction, this partitioning into two stories. The Platonic tradition knew a distinction between two worlds. It knew the world of innumerable stories, tracing a descent and a climb that confronted each other on every step of a stairway which lost itself in the eminence of the One and fell apart into the sea of the multiple—the stairway-universe of the neo-Platonic tradition. But the world of only two stories, separated by a fold which reverberates on both sides in accordance with different orders, is the preeminent Baroque innovation. It expresses the transformation of the cosmos into "mundus."

Among the so-called Baroque painters, Tintoretto and El Greco stand out, incomparable. And yet they share this characteristic of the Baroque. The *Entombment of the Count of Orgaz* is, for example, divided in two by a horizontal line, and below the bodies squeeze up against one another, while above the soul rises, in a thin coil, awaited by holy monads each of which is endowed with its own spontaneity. In the works of Tintoretto, the lower level shows bodies bowed down by their own heaviness, the souls stumbling, bending and falling in the coils of matter; in contrast, the upper half acts like a powerful magnet drawing them up, making them straddle the yellow folds of light, the folds of fire which revive the bodies, infecting them with a vertigo, but a "vertigo of the heights." So it is with the two halves of the *Last Judgement*.[14]

The scission of interior and exterior thus refers back to the distinc-

14. Régis Debray, "Le Tintoret ou le sentiment panique de la vie," in *Eloges* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), 13–57. (Debray criticizes Sartre for having seen only the lower level of Tintoretto's works). And Jean Paris, *L'Espace et le regard* (Paris: Seuil, 1965): the analysis of the "ascensional space" in El Greco's works, 226–28 ("like Cartesian divers men thus balance earthly gravity and divine attraction").

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tion of the two stories, but this in turn refers to the Fold, actualized in the intimate folds that the soul encloses in the upper story, and realized in the coils, under the influence of matter, and generated from one another, always on the exterior, on the lower level. The ideal fold is thus a *Zwiefalt,* a fold which differentiates and self-differentiates. When Heidegger refers to the *Zwiefalt* as the differential of difference (*le différenciant de la différence*), he means above all that the differentiation does not refer to undifferentiated origin, but to a Difference which ceaselessly unfolds and folds back from both sides and which only unfolds one by folding back the other in a coextensivity of the unveiling and veiling of Being, of the presence and withdrawal of the being.[15] The "duplicity" of the fold is necessarily reproduced on both of the sides which it distinguishes and which it sets into a mutual relation by distinguishing them: a scission in which each term sets off the other, a tension in which each fold is extended into the other.

The fold is undoubtedly the most important notion of Mallarmé—not only the notion, but rather the operation, the operatory act which makes of him a great Baroque poet. *Hérodiade* is already the poem of the fold. The fold of the world is the fan, or "l'unanime pli" [unanimous fold]. And sometimes the open fan makes all the grains of matter rise and fall, ashes and mists through which one perceives the visible as if through the holes in a veil, according to the way the folds [*replis*] offer glimpses of the stone in the indentation of their inflections, "fold following fold," revealing the city, but also its absence or withdrawal, a conglomerate of dust, hollow collectivities, hallucinatory armies and assemblies. In the long run, it is characteristic of the sensual side of the

15. André Scala has examined the genesis of the fold in Heidegger's works (*La Genèse du pli chez Heidegger* [forthcoming]). The notion arises between 1946 and 1953, especially in "Moira," *Early Greek Thinking,* trans. David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984); it succeeds the Intermediary or Incident, *Zwischen-fall,* which indicated more of a fall. It is the "Greek" fold par excellence, attributed to Parmenides. Scala points to a commentary of Riezler, who, as early as 1933, found in Parmenides a "folding of being," "a fold of the one in being and non-being, both drawn intimately into one another" (*Faltung*); Kurt Goldstein, when he discovers himself to be Parmenidian in his understanding of the living, draws on Riezler (*La Structure de l'organisme,* [Paris: Gallimard, 1983], 325–29). Another source, according to Scala, would play on problems of new perspective, and on the method of projection which already appears in Dürer's works, under the name of "zwiefalten cubum": cf., Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albert Dürer,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), 259: ("an original and, if one may say so, proto-topological method of developing them [solids] in such a way that the facets form a coherent "net" which, when cut out of paper and properly folded where two facets adjoin, will form an actual, three-dimensional model of the solid in question"). Analogous problems resurface in contemporary painting.

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fan, of the sensual itself, to stir up the dust through which one sees and which betrays its inanity. But sometimes too, from the other, now closed, side of the fan ("le sceptre des rivages roses . . . ce blanc vol fermé que tu poses . . ." [the scepter of rosy shores . . . that closed white flight which you set down . . .]), the fold no longer moves toward a pulverization, but surpasses itself or finds its finality in an inclusion, "a heaping of thickness, offering the miniscule tomb, clearly, of the soul." The fold is inseparable from the wind. Ventilated by the wind, it is no longer the fold of matter through which one sees, but the fold of the soul in which one reads, "yellow folds of thought," the Book or the monad with multiple leaves. So it contains all folds, since the set of possible combinations of its leaves is infinite; but it includes them within its enclosure and all of its actions are internal. And yet, they are not two different worlds; the fold found in a newspaper, dust or mist, inanity, is a circumstantial fold which must have its own, novel mode of correspondence with the book, the fold of the Event, the unity which gives being, an inclusive multiplicity, a collectivity that has taken on consistency.

With Leibniz, it is not the folds of a fan but the veins of marble. On one hand there are all those coils of matter by which one sees living organisms in the microscope, collectivities (such as armies and herds) through the folds of dusts which they themselves stir up, green through the dust of yellow and blue, inanities or fictions, teeming holes which ceaselessly feed our uneasiness, our lassitude, or our dullness of spirit. And then, on the other hand, there are those folds in the soul, where inflection becomes inclusion (just as Mallarmé said that folding becomes heaping): one no longer sees, one reads. Leibniz begins using the word "read" both for the act within the privileged region of the monad and for the act of God throughout the monad itself.[16] It is well known that the total book is as much the dream of Leibniz as it is of Mallarmé, although they themselves never gave up working fragments. Our error lies in believing that they did not achieve what they wanted to—in circumstantial letters and opuscules, they perfected this unique Book, this book of monads, which could bear all dispersion as well as all combinations. The monad is the book or reading room. The visible and the legible, the exterior and the interior, the facade and the room: they are not two different worlds, for the visible has its own way of being

16. *Monadology*, § 61: "He who sees all could read in each everything that happens everywhere and even what has happened and will happen . . . but a soul can read within itself only what it represents distinctly."

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read (like the newspaper for Mallarmé), and the legible has its own kind of theater (its theater of reading, in both Leibniz and Mallarmé). The combinations of the visible and the legible constitute the "emblems" or the allegories that were dear to the Baroque. We are always being led back to a new kind of correspondence or mutual expression, "inter-expression," fold following fold.

The Baroque is inseparable from a new regime of light and colors. One can at first think of light and darkness as 1 and 0, as the two levels of the world separated by a thin line of waters: the Happy and the Damned.[17] It is not a question however of an opposition. If one moves into the upper story, in a room without door or window, one recognizes that it is already very dark, almost lined with black, "fuscum subnigrum." This is a Baroque innovation: in place of the white chalk or plaster ground which prepared a picture, Tintoretto and Caravagio substitute a dark reddish-brown on which they place the deepest shadows, painting directly onto it and shading off towards the shadows.[18] The status of the painting changes, things surge up from the background, colors well up from a common depth which attests to their obscure nature, the figures are defined more by their covering than by their contour. But this is not in opposition to light, this is, on the contrary, by virtue of the new regime of light. Leibniz says in the *Profession of Faith of the Philosopher:* "It slips, as though through a slit in the midst of shadows." Is one to understand it as coming from a basement window, from a narrow, bent or folded opening, by the intermediary of mirrors, the white consisting "of a great number of small, reflective mirrors"? More strictly speaking, the monads being without slits, a luminosity has been "sealed in," which lights up in each of them when it is raised up to reason, and which produces white through all the little interior mirrors. The light gives off white, but it also gives off shadow as well; it gives off white, which blends with the lighted section of the monad, but which darkens or shades off toward the dim background, "fuscum," from which things emerge "through well executed shadows and hues in varying degrees of intensity." As with

17. On the Leibnizian invention of binary arithmetic, on its two characters, 1 and 0, on the link with the "Chinese figures of Fohy," cf., *Invention de l'arithmétique binaire, Explication de l'arithmétique binaire* in Leibniz *Mathematische Schriften,* ed. C. I. Gerhardt (Berlin: A. Asher, 1849–63), vol. 7. The reader is referred to the annotated edition by Christiane Frémont, Leibniz, *Discours sur la théologie naturelle des Chinois* (Paris: L'Herne, 1987).

18. Cf., Goethe's *Theory of Colours,* trans. and notes by C. L. Eastlake (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1967), §§ 902–09.

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Desargues, it is enough to invert perspective or to put "the luminous in place of the eye, the opaque in place of the object, and shadow in place of projection" ("Préceptes pour avancer les sciences," *Philosophischen Schriften*), vol. 7, 169; *New Essays*, 2, chap. 9, § 8). Wölfflin stressed the lesson of the progressivity of a light which waxes and wanes, transmitted by degrees. It is the relativity of light (as much as of movement), the inseparability of light and dark, the effacement of contour, in short, a rebuttal to Descartes, who remained a man of the Renaissance, from the double perspective of a physics of light and of a logic of the idea. What is light plunges ceaselessly into shadow. Chiaroscuro fills the monad according to a series which can be followed in both directions: at one end the dark background, at the other sealed light; the latter, when it lights up, produces white in the section set aside for it, but the white grows dimmer and dimmer, yields to darkness and deepening shadow as it spreads out towards the dark background throughout the monad. Beyond this series there is on the one hand God, who commanded that there be light, and with it the mirror-white, but on the other hand there are shadows, an absolute black, which consist in an infinite number of holes which do not reflect the rays that fall on them, an infinitely spongy and cavernous matter which ultimately consists of all these holes.[19] Does the line of light, or the fold of the two stories, pass between the shadows and the dark background which it draws from them? In the final analysis it does, insofar as the lower story is nothing but a basement hollowed out by basements, and matter, pushed away beneath the waters, is reduced almost to nothing. But concrete matter is above, its holes already filled with an increasingly subtle matter, so that the fold of the two stories is more like the common limit between two kinds of full folds.

The entry of Germany onto the philosophical scene implies the whole German soul, which, according to Nietzsche, shows itself to be less "profound" than full of folds and coils.[20] How is one to paint the portrait of Leibniz the person without including in it the extreme tension between an open facade and a closed interior, each independent and both regulated by a strange, preestablished correspondence? It is an almost schizophrenic tension. Leibniz is depicted in terms of the Baroque. "Leibniz is more interesting than Kant as the type of the German: easy-going, full of noble words, sly, supple, malleable, a medi-

19. Black, the somber background ("fuscum subnigrum"), colors, white and light are defined in Leibniz, "Table de définitions" in *Opuscules et fragments*, 489.

20. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 8, § 244.

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ator (between Christianity and mechanist philosophy), with, except for his own person, an enormous audacity, hidden under a mask and courteously importunate, modest in appearance. . . . Leibniz is dangerous, a good German who needs facades and philosophies of facades, but rash and, in himself, as mysterious as can be".[21] The courtly wig is a facade, an entrance, like the wish never to shock established feelings in any way, and the art of presenting his system from varying viewpoints, in such or such a mirror, according to the presumed intelligence of a correspondent or of a contradictor who appears at the door, while the System itself lies above, turning on itself, losing absolutely nothing in the compromises below, in the lower level whose secret it holds, taking rather the "best of all sides" to deepen itself or to create yet another fold, in the room of closed doors and walled-in windows where Leibniz has enclosed himself, saying: Everything is "always the same thing—once the degrees of perfection have been set aside."

The finest inventors, the finest commentators of the Baroque, dismayed by the way that, despite them, the notion threatened to extend arbitrarily, have had doubts about its consistency. The Baroque was thus restricted to a single genre (architecture), or to an increasingly restrictive determination of periods and locations, or even to a radical denial. The Baroque never existed. Still, it is odd to deny the existence of the Baroque in the same way as one denies the existence of unicorns or pink elephants. For in the latter case the concept is already a given, while in the case of the Baroque it is a question of knowing whether one can invent a concept capable (or not) of giving it existence. Irregular pearls exist, but the Baroque has no reason to exist without a concept which forms that very reason. It is easy to deprive the Baroque of its existence, it is enough not to propose its concept. There is no fundamental difference between wondering if Leibniz is the Baroque philosopher par excellence, or if he formulates a concept capable of bringing the Baroque itself into existence. In this respect, those who have linked Leibniz and the Baroque have done so by virtue of an excessively broad concept, as with Knecht and the "coincidence of opposites." Christine Buci-Glucksmann proposes a much more interesting criterion, a dialectic between sight and seeing [*voir et regard*], but this criterion is perhaps too restrictive as well and would only allow for the definition of an optical fold.[22] For us, however, the criteri-

21. Cited by Ernst Bertram, *Nietzsche,* (Rieder edition), 233.

22. Herbert Knecht, *La Logique de Leibniz, essai sur le rationalisme baroque,* (Lausanne: L'âge d'homme, 1981); Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *La Folie du voir, de*

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on or the operative concept of the Baroque is the Fold, in its full comprehension and extension: fold upon fold. If one can extend the Baroque beyond precise historical limits, it seems to us that it is always by virtue of this criterion, which allows us to recognize Michaux when he writes "To live in the folds," or Boulez when he invokes Mallarmé and composes "Fold upon fold," or Hantaï when he creates a method out of folding. And if, on the contrary, we go back further into the past, how might we already have to find the Baroque in, for example, Uccello? Because he is not content to paint blue and pink horses, and to draw lances like streaks of light directed toward all the points of sky; he is forever drawing "*mazocchi*, which are circles of wood covered with cloth and placed on the head, such that the folds of the fabric, when pulled back, surround the entire face"; he runs up against the incomprehension of his contemporaries, because "the power of *developing absolutely* all things and the strange series of folded hoods seem more revealing than the magnificent marble figures of the great Donatello."[23] There would thus be a Baroque line, passed down in strict accordance with the fold and which could bring together architects, painters, musicians, poets, philosophers. Of course, it could be objected that the concept of the fold itself remains too broad: to speak only of the plastic arts, what period and what style could fail to see in the fold a painted or sculpted line? And it is not only clothing, but also the body, rocks, the waters, the earth, line itself. Baltrusaitis defines the fold in general by scission, but a scission which causes each of the two split terms to set each other off anew. It is in this sense that he defines the romanesque fold by the scission/setting-off of the figurative and geometry.[24] Could one not as well define the Oriental fold by the scission/setting-off of empty and full? And all the others will have to be defined in turn by a comparative analysis. Uccello's folds are not truly Baroque because they remain caught in geometrical solids, polygonal, inflexible structures, however ambiguous they may be. If we wish to maintain the operative identity of the Baroque and the fold, we must then show that in all other cases the fold remains limited while in the Baroque it experiences a limitless release, whose conditions can

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l'esthétique baroque, (Paris: Galilée, 1986): the author develops a conception of the Baroque that draws on Lacan and Merleau-Ponty.

23. Marcel Schwob, *Vies imaginaires,* (Paris: 10/18), 229–31.

24. Jurgis Baltrusaitis, *Formations, déformations,* (Paris: Flammarion, 1986), chap. 9.

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be determined. The folds seem to take leave of their supports, cloth, granite, and cloud, to enter into an infinite competition, as in the *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* of El Greco (the one in the National Gallery). Or else, notably in the *Baptism of Christ*, the counterfold of calf and knee, where the knee seems the inversion of the calf, lends an infinite undulation to the leg, while the pinching of the cloud in the center transforms it into a double fan. . . . It is these characteristics rigorously interpreted that must account for the extreme specificity of the Baroque and for the possibility of expanding it, without arbitrary extension, beyond its historical limits: the Baroque's contribution to art in general, Leibniz's contribution to philosophy.

1. *The Fold:* The Baroque invents the infinite work or operation. The problem is not how to finish a fold, but how to continue it, make it go through the roof, take it to infinity. For the fold affects not only all kinds of materials, which thus become matter of expression in accordance with different scales and speeds and vectors (the mountains and the waters, papers, fabrics, living tissues, the brain), but it also determines and brings form into being and into appearance, it makes of it a form of expression, *Gestaltung*, the genetic element or the line of infinite inflexion, the curve of a single variable.

2. *The Interior and the Exterior:* The infinite fold separates, or passes between matter and the soul, the facade and the sealed room, the interior and the exterior. For the line of inflection is a virtuality ceaselessly differentiating itself: actualized in the soul it is realized in its own way in matter. It is the Baroque characteristic: an exterior always on the exterior, an interior always on the interior. It is characterized as an infinite "receptivity," and an infinite "spontaneity"—the exterior facade for receiving, the interior chambers for action. Even up through our own time Baroque architecture continues to place two principles in confrontation: a weight-bearing principle and a covering or facing principle (whether in Gropius or in Loos).[25] The conciliation of the two will not be direct but necessarily harmonious, inspiring a new harmony; the same thing, the line, is expressed in the rising of the interior song of the soul, by memory or by heart, as in the extrinsic creation of the material of the musical score, from cause to cause. But,

25. Bernard Cache, *L'Ameublement du territoire.*

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the fact is precisely that—the expressed does not exist beyond its expressions.

3. *The High and the Low:* The perfect harmony of the scission, or the resolution of tension, is effected by the distribution of two stories, which both belong to one and the same world (the line of the universe). The matter-facade tends downwards while the soul-chamber rises. The infinite fold thus passes between two stories. But in differentiating itself, it swarms over both sides: the fold differentiates itself into folds, which insinuate themselves into the interior and overflow onto the exterior, articulating themselves into the high and the low. Coils of matter when conditioned by exteriority, folds of the soul when conditioned by enclosure. Coils of the musical score and folds of the song. The Baroque is the preeminent informal art: on the ground, at ground level, at hand, it comprises the textures of matter (the great modern Baroque painters, from Paul Klee to Fautrier, Dubuffet, Bettencourt . . .). But the informal is not the negation of form; it posits form as folded, as existing only as "mental landscape," in the soul or the mind, at a height; it thus includes immaterial folds as well. The kinds of matter constitute the base, but the folded shapes are its forms. One moves from materials to forms. From grounds and terrains to habitats and salons. From *Texturology* to *Logology.* These are the two orders, the two stories of Dubuffet, and the discovery of their harmony, which must go all the way to the point of indiscernability: is it a texture, or a fold of the soul, of thought?[26] Matter which reveals its texture becomes material, in the way that form which reveals its folds becomes power. It is the pair material-power which, in the Baroque, replaces matter and form (the primitive forces being those of the soul).

4. *The Unfold:* certainly not the opposite of the fold, nor its effacement, but the continuation or the extension of its act, the condition of its manifestation. When the fold ceases to be represented and becomes a "method," an operation, an act, the unfold becomes the result of the act which is expressed in precisely that way. Hantaï begins by repre-

26. On "the two orders," material and immaterial, cf., Jean Dubuffet, *Prospectus et tous écrits suivants,* collected and presented by Hubert Damisch, (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), vol. 2, 79–81. Cf., also the *Catalogue des travaux de Jean Dubuffet,* ed. Max Loreau (Paris: Minuit, 1964): "Tables paysagées, paysages du mental"; and "Habitats, Closerie Falbala, Salon d'été" (the Logological cabinet is a veritable interior of a monad).

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senting the fold—tubular, teeming—but soon folds the cloth or paper. Then there are, as it were, two poles, the one of the "Studies" and the one of the "Tables." Sometimes, the surface is locally and irregularly folded, and the exterior sides of the opened fold are painted, so that the spreading-out, the opening, the unfolding cause the fields of color and the zones of white to alternate, modulating one with the other. At other times, it is the solid which projects its internal planes onto a flat surface, regularly folded in accordance with the edges: now the fold has a resting point, it is knotted and closed at each intersection and unfolds to set the interior white into circulation.[27] Here, setting the color in the coils of matter to vibrate, there setting the light in the folds of an immaterial surface to vibrate. And yet, why is it that the Baroque line is only a possibility for Hantaï? Because he never stops running up against another possibility, which is the line of the Orient. The painted and the non-painted are not distributed as form and background, but as fullness and emptiness in a reciprocal becoming. Which is why Hantaï leaves the eye of the fold empty and only paints the sides (line of the Orient); and yet it sometimes happens that in the same region he will make a succession of folds which no longer leave any empty spaces (the full Baroque line). Perhaps it is profoundly characteristic of the Baroque to set itself in confrontation with the Orient. It is already the case with Leibniz's undertaking in binary arithmetics: in one and zero Leibniz recognizes fullness and emptiness in a typically Chinese manner, but the Baroque Leibniz does not believe in emptiness, which always seems to him full of a coiled matter, and consequently his binary arithmetics superposes the folds which the decimal system, and Nature herself, conceals in apparently empty spaces. For Leibniz and the Baroque, folds are always full.[28]

5.*Textures:* Leibnizian physics comprises two principal headings, one concerning the active, or so-called derivative, forces which relate to matter, the other the passive forces, the resistance of the material: texture (On textures, cf., Letter to Des Bosses, August 1715. Leibniz's

27. On Hantaï and the method of folding, cf., Marcelin Pleynet, *Identité de la lumière,* catalogue (Arca Marseille). And also Dominique Fourcade, *Un coup de pinceau c'est la pensée,* catalogue, (Paris: Centre Pompidou); Yves Michaud, *Métaphysique de Hantaï,* catalogue (Venice): Geneviève Bonnefoi, *Hantaï, Paintings, Watercolors 1971–1975* (New York: Pierre Matisse, 1975).

28. Leibniz counted on his binary arithmetics to reveal a periodicity in the number series (a periodicity which Nature perhaps concealed "in its coils") as well as for the primary numbers (*New Essays,* 4, chap. 17, § 13).

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physics testifies to a consistent interest in problems of the resistance of materials). It is perhaps at its limit that texture is best revealed, just before rupture or tearing, when spreading is no longer opposed to the fold but expresses it in its pure state, in accordance with a Baroque figure indicated by Bernard Cache (hysteresis more than spreading). Here again, the fold pushes back groove and hole; it does not belong to the same pictorial vision. As a general rule, it is the way in which matter



folds that constitute its texture: it is defined less by its heterogeneous and genuinely distinct parts than by the manner in which, by virtue of particular folds, these parts become inseparable. From that one gets the concept of Mannerism in its operatory relation to the Baroque. And this is what Leibniz was talking about when he referred to "paper or tunic." Everything folds in its own way, the rope and the stick as well as colors, which separate out in accordance with the concavity or convexity of the ray of light, and sounds, which rise in pitch in accordance as "the trembling parts are shorter and tighter." Texture thus depends not on the parts themselves, but on the strata which determine their "cohesion": the new status of the object, its object-matter [*objectile*], is inseparable from the various strata which dilate, like so many opportunities for detours and coils. Relative to the folds within its power, matter becomes matter of expression. In this respect, the fold of matter or texture must be seen in relation to several factors, first of all light, *chiaroscuro*, the way in which the fold catches light, the way it varies according to the time of day and the sort of illumination (the contemporary research of Tromeur and Nicole Grenot). But also in relation to depth: how the fold itself determines a "shallow depth" which can be superposed. Here, the paper fold defines a minimum of depth on our scale, as is seen in the Baroque *trompe-l'œil* letter holders, where the representation of a dog-eared card throws what lies on this side of the wall into depth. So it is with the soft and superposed depth of fabrics which has served as an unending inspiration to painting and which Helga Heinzen has, in our time, carried to a new power when, the body consigned to absence, the representation of striped and folded cloth covers an entire painting in falls and elevations, in swells and suns, following a line that comes, this time, from Islam. Or again the theater

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of materials, when a material caught, hardened in its spread-out state or its hysteresis, can assume a felicity of expression in itself the folds of another matter, as in the wood sculptures of Renonciat, where cedar of Lebanon turns into plastic drop-cloth, or Paraña pine into "cotton and feathers." In short, the way in which all these textures of matter tend toward a higher point, a spiritual point which envelops form, which holds it enveloped and which alone contains the secret of the material folds below. Where do these latter flow from, given that they cannot be accounted for by the constituant parts and that the "teeming," the perceptual displacement of contours, comes from the projection onto matter of something spiritual, of a fantasmagoria on the order of thought, as Dubuffet says. Though in another way, the sculptor Jeanclos nonetheless treads an analogous path when he moves from the infinitely coiled, knotted, and crimped physical leaves of cabbage, or from sheets infinitely spread out, to metaphysical peas, spiritual sleepers or monad heads who give full meaning to the expression "the folds of sleep".[29] Active or passive, the derivative forces of matter refer back to the primitive forces, those of the soul. Always the two stories, and their harmony, their harmonization.

6. *The Paradigm:* The search for a model of the fold proceeds by way of a choice of matter. Is it the paper fold, as the Orient suggests, or the fold of cloth, which seems to predominate in the Occident? The crux of the question is that the material components of the fold (the texture) must not hide the formal element or the form of expression. In this regard the Greek fold is unsatisfactory, though it rightly aspires to currency in the highest realms, political power, the power of thought—the Platonic paradigm of weaving as a mesh remains on the level of textures but does not draw out the formal elements of the fold. For the Greek fold, as the *Politics* and the *Timaeus* demonstrate, presupposes a common measure between two terms that mix and therefore operates by means of circular movements which correspond to the repetition of the proportion. This is the reason that the Platonic forms fold, but never reach the formal element of the fold. The latter can only appear with the infinite, in the incommensurable and the extravagant, when the variable curve has unseated the circle (On the presence or

29. Jeanclos-Mossé, *Sculptures et dessins,* (Orléans: Maison de la culture).

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absence of "common measure," cf., Leibniz, "On Freedom" in *Philosophical Papers and Letters,* vol. 1, 404–10). So it goes with the Baroque fold, with its corresponding status as power of thought and political force.

—Translated by Jonathan Strauss

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