

## **Definition: 'Fold'**

Although appearing throughout Deleuze's work, the fold is particularly mobilised in the books on Foucault and Leibniz. In each case then the fold is developed in relation to another's work. We might even say that these books, like others Deleuze has written, involve a folding - or 'doubling' - of Deleuze's own thought 'into' the thought of another. We might go further and say that thought itself, enigmatically, is a kind of fold - the folding inside of what Deleuze calls the 'forces of the outside'.

Specifically the concept of the fold allows Deleuze to think creatively about the production of subjectivity, and ultimately about the possibilities for, and production of, 'non-human' forms of 'subjectivity'. In fact on one level the fold is a critique of typical accounts of subjectivity - those that presume a simple interiority and exteriority (appearance and essence, or surface and depth) - for the fold announces that the inside is nothing more than a fold of the outside. Deleuze gives us Foucault's vivid illustration of this relation - the Renaissance madman, who, in being put to sea in a ship becomes a passenger, or 'prisoner' in the interior of the exterior - the fold of the sea. In Deleuze's account of Foucault this picture becomes increasingly complex. There is a variety of modalities of folds - from the fold of our material selves, our bodies - to the folding of time, or simply memory. Indeed subjectivity might be understood as precisely a topology of these different kinds of folds.

The fold in this sense is also the name for one's relation to oneself (or, the affect of the self *on* the self). The Greeks were the first to discover, and deploy, this technique of folding, or of 'self mastery'. They 'invented' subjectivation - the self-production of one's subjectivity. Subsequent cultures have invented their own forms of subjectivation, their own kinds of foldings, for example Christianity, and of course it might be said that our own time has its own folds - or even that it requires new ones. This gives the fold an explicitly ethical dimension, but also a political one, for as Deleuze remarks the emergence of new kinds of

struggle inevitably also involves the production of new kinds of subjectivity, new kinds of fold (Deleuze has in mind the uprisings of 1968).

As for Deleuze's Foucault, so for his Leibniz: the fold names the relationship – one entailing domination - of oneself to (and 'over') ones 'self'. Indeed one's subjectivity for Deleuze-Leibniz is a question of mastery - a kind of Nietzschean mastery - over the swarm of one's being. This can be configured as a question of ownership, or of folding. To 'have' is to fold that which is outside inside. In the Leibniz book we are offered other diagrams of our subjectivity. For example the two floored baroque house. The lower floor, or the regime of matter, is in and of the world - receiving its imprint as it were. Here matter is folded in the manner of origami. Caverns containing other caverns, which contain still more caverns. The world is superabundant, like a lake teeming with fish, with smaller fish between these fish, and so on *ad infinitum*. There is no boundary between the organic and the inorganic here; each is folded into the other in a continuous 'texturology'.

The upper chamber of the baroque house is closed in on itself, without window or opening. It 'contains' innate ideas, the folds of the soul - or what we might call, following Guattari, the incorporeal aspect of our subjectivity. And then there is the fold between these two floors. This latter fold is like one's style in the world, or indeed the style of a work of art. It is in this sense that the upper chamber paradoxically 'contains' the whole world folded within itself. This world is one amongst many 'possible worlds' each as different as the beings that 'express' them. The world of a tick for example is different to that of a human, involving as it does just the perception of light, the smell of its prey and the tactile sensation of where best to burrow. This is not the tick's representation of the world but the latter's expression - or folding in - of it.

As with the book on Foucault the later parts of the Leibniz book attend to future foldings. Deleuze calls attention to the possibility of a new kind of harmony - or fold - between the two

floors of our subjectivity. This new kind of fold involves an opening up of the closed chamber of the upper floor and the concomitant affirmation of difference, contact and communication. We might say here, in an echo of the Foucault book, that these new foldings are simply the name for those new kinds of subjectivity that emerged in the 1960s - in the various experiments in communal living, drug use, and sexuality - as well as in the emergence of new prosthetic technologies.

References:

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### **Modulation: 'Fold' + Art and Technology**

In his appendix to the book on Foucault Deleuze continues his meditation on the fold - but looks to the the future. If the fold is the operation proper to man, then the superfold is synonymous with the superman - understood as that which 'frees life' from within man. The superman is in charge of the animals (the capturing of codes), the rocks (the realm of the inorganic) - and the very being of language (the realm of affect 'below' signification). This new kind of fold no longer figures man as a limiting factor on the the infinite (the classical historical formation), nor positions him solely in relationship to the forces of finitude - life, labour and language (the formation of the nineteenth century). Rather, in this new kind of fold man is involved in what Deleuze terms an 'unlimited finity'. It is a fold in which a 'finite number of components produce an infinite number of combinations'. This is the difference

and repetition of Deleuze - or what we might term his fractal ontology. We might also say that it is the radical discovery of 'man's' potential - the revolutionary activation of immanence.

This 'superfold' will however still involve relations with an outside. In fact, for Deleuze, it will be the result of three 'future' folds: the fold of molecular biology - or the discovery of the genetic code; the fold of silicon with carbon - or the emergence of third generation machines, cybernetics and information technology; and the folding of language - or the uncovering of a 'strange language within language', an atypical and asignifying form of expression that exists at the limits of language. As with the other two this is a fold that opens man out to that which is specifically non human - forces that can then be folded back 'into' himself to produce new modalities of being and new means of expression.

The first two folds above involve the utilisation of technology in the production of new kinds of life and new kinds of subjectivity. They might produce dissenting, politically radical subjects: Donna Haraway's cyborgs or Hardt and Negri's 'New Barbarians' for example. But they might equally produce simply 'new' commodified and alienated subjectivities - or even more deadly military assemblages. It is in this sense that the third fold above is crucial. It is a fold that breaks down - or deviates from - dominant signification, counteracts order words or simply foregrounds language - and life's - affective, intensive, and inherently creative nature. This amounts to saying that the first two folds must themselves be stammered by the third.

In the book on Kafka this attention to stuttering or stammering is seen as characteristic of a minor literature. A minor literature utilises the same terms as a major one - but in a different way (it produces movement from within the major). Another way of putting this is that a minor literature names the becoming revolutionary of all literature (the other two accompanying characteristics of a minor literature being its always already collective nature and its always already political nature). Can we perhaps extend this notion of a minor

literature to other realms? Might there be a sense in which a resistant and radical politics today must involve a stuttering, or stammering of 'language'? In the visual arts for example this might involve the turning away from dominant regimes of signification, or at least a stammering in and of them - and in so doing the production of new kinds of 'stuttering' subjectivities. This might be a description of some of the more radical avant-garde groups of the twentieth century - for example Dada or the Situationists (from collage to *detournement*). It might also name those 'expanded practices' that positioned themselves outside of the gallery, or simply stuttered the dominant languages of sculpture and painting. Art practices - from performance and installation art to the 'relational aesthetics' of today - which turn away from typical definitions of art - or indeed typical notions of political engagement. We might add that many of these practices are also often specifically collective in nature. In all these cases art does not transport us to an elsewhere but utilises the stuff of the world (we might say the stuff of capitalism) albeit in a *different* way. Art here is the discovery of new combinations - new ways of folding the world 'into' the self, or, more simply, new kinds of subjectivity.

Of course there may be other foldings still - the Oriental fold for example - which, as Deleuze remarks, is perhaps not a fold at all - and consequently not a process of subjectivation. The relation of art to this non fold might be one of *ritual*. Which is to say not the production of possible worlds, not even the production of subjectivity - or rather both of these but only insofar as they allow access to something, the void, the 'ground', from which these worlds, these subjects have emerged. An unfolding then as that which always accompanies the fold, producing new folds but also opening us out to that which is yet to be folded.

#### References:

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### **Modulation: 'Subjectivity' + Art**

Deleuze has been portrayed as a philosopher of dissolution, as a thinker of flows and intensities somehow 'outside' of, or 'beyond', the human. Indeed a cursory reading of *A Thousand Plateaus* might lead one to suppose that Deleuze is interested in 'escaping' lived life. Certainly this trajectory is there, perhaps most infamously in the notion of the body without organs - understood as that strategy that helps free us from the strata that constitutes us as human (that is to say, in a particular configuration). However Deleuze's philosophy is also very much one of caution - it is never a question of wildly destratifying but of dosages, of finding *creative* lines of flight, those that lead somewhere, and in fact, those from which one can 'return'. Deterritorialisation always ends in a reterritorialisation - and in fact needs a territory from which to operate.

It is in this sense that Deleuze might also be understood as a constructive philosopher. Certainly he is involved in the prodigious construction of concepts, as evidenced by this dictionary. However we might also see him, specifically in his collaborations, as being involved in the parallel project of the construction, or *production*, of subjectivity. This is even more the case with Guattari's own work, which was always involved in thinking through what

Guattari called 'resingularisation' - the potentiality for, and practicalities of, reconfiguring our subjectivities. For Guattari, as for Deleuze, this is a pragmatic, and specifically materialist project. Through involvement with certain materials of expression, with groups and individuals, and always with an 'outside' (however this is defined) we can open up new universes of reference - new ways of seeing and being in new kinds of world. For Guattari *La Borde* clinic operated as just such a site of transformation. It encouraged new relationships and new experiences. At stake here was not the reintegration of a 'cured' individual back into society, but an encouragement to become involved, to participate, in one's own processual self creation. Whatever the successes or failures of the clinic, we have here an interesting framework for thinking those collaborative and collective art practices of today that might be seen as producing communities and subjectivities in precisely this sense. This field of expanded practice, or 'relational aesthetics' as it has become known does not require spectators as such but participants - who are 'transformed' through their interaction with the practice.

We might recognise Deleuze's Spinozism here. Indeed Spinoza's ethics involves a similar mapping to the above: the organisation of one's world so as to produce productive - that is *joyful* - encounters. Such encounters, which involve the coming together of two 'bodies' that essentially agree with one another, have the concomitant result of increasing our capacity to act in the world. We might call this a rhizomatics of friendship, the latter understood in its broadest sense. Ultimately for Spinoza this ethics - which involves exploring what a body is capable of (and this might be an individual or a group) begins with ethical principles or guidelines, but ultimately it produces a knowledge of one's self and one's world - and in fact a certain overcoming of one's separation from the world.

Perhaps the key factor preventing these transformations is habit - not just our daily routines but also our dominant refrains and typical reactions to the world. It is here that aesthetics becomes important. Aesthetics, naming as it does a 'disinterested' response to the world, can

operate as a rupture in otherwise dominant regimes of signification and expression (the clichés of our being - and indeed of our consumer culture). Aesthetics here need not necessarily be a transcendent category, rather we can think of it simply as the generation of unexpected affects in and on the body. This rupture can and does produce possibilities for resingularisation.

Another way of thinking this 'immanent aesthetic' is as involving a kind of hesitation - or gap - between stimulus and response. Deleuze's Bergsonism attends to this: the pause between action and reaction is what constitutes the human as a particularly complex brain-body assemblage. This pause allows a certain amount of freedom, allows for the possibility of a more creative response to the world. We might say then that in today's world it is important to change speed - to sometimes slow down - and even at times, to remain still. Art, in fact the *contemplation* of art, might have a role to play here (this is also the sense in which meditation can be understood as a creative technology of self production).

Of course this 'aesthetic' might be understood as a 'beyond' to subjectivity in some senses, and Deleuze does throughout his work attend to those experiences that are atypical and 'non-ordinary'. For example, what happens to an individual in a 'world without others'? Here the interaction with the world takes on an idiosyncratic and perverted character. The individual harnesses cosmic forces and 'becomes world' as it were. Again this might be a name for certain art practices from prehistory to today, those that allow access to a kind of immanent beyond to the everyday, and to everyday consciousness. We might say then that this is the aesthetic - and *ritualistic* - function of art that always accompanies the latter's ethical, or indeed political character.

References:

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