

Deleuze and Phenomenology

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ABSTRACT. In contrast to other poststructuralist theorists, Gilles Deleuze did not seek for a break-up with phenomenology. Instead, he followed his credo that the task of philosophy is to take elements of existing philosophies and turn them into something different. The same applies for his adoption of phenomenological positions. This paper traces back the various roots of phenomenological thinking in his writing focusing on Jean-Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Concerning Sartre, Deleuze – in opposition to Foucault – admits that he learned philosophizing from Sartre by gaining insight into the necessity of concepts to be dramatized in order to become vital. Deleuze's relation to Heidegger is rather ambiguous since Deleuze is in favor of the idea of ontological difference, but at the same time he criticizes the territorial implications of Heidegger's history of being. Finally, and most inspiring to Deleuze, was Merleau-Ponty's concepts of flesh and folding which was carried further by Deleuze to gain a topological aesthetic.

«He freely compared himself to a wave, a crest among other crests, and the entire sea pulled upwards by a hemstitch of foam».¹
Sartre on Merleau-Ponty

«Entering into an existing wave. There's no longer an origin as starting point, but a sort of putting-into-orbit».²
Deleuze on Surfing

There are different ways of answering the question how Deleuze's work relates to phenomenology. One way is to describe how it relates to authors who can be called phenomenologists, in the sense of being successors to Husserl. Another way is to define the aim of phenomenology and then examine the parallels to

1 SARTRE 1999, p. 570.

2 DELEUZE 1995b, p. 121.

Deleuze's work. Connected to this, the question can be posed whether his philosophy is a questioning or a development of the phenomenology of the 20th century – even, whether Deleuze's philosophy itself may be regarded as phenomenology.

The following will pursue all three strategies and move from Deleuze's relation to individual phenomenologists to the phenomenological arguments he takes up, and to the impact Deleuze in turn has on phenomenology. This requires some comments on the profile of his philosophy: This is done with the help of his concepts of *conceptual dramatization* and *territorial processes*, as well as Deleuze's notion of *immanence*. It is in his characterization of his philosophy as *transcendental empiricism* that Deleuze comes closest to phenomenology. Furthermore, the concept of *geophilosophy* is mentioned, which has to be read as a direct answer to the later writings of Husserl.

To begin with a step which can be seen as the most explicit one: The direct reception of phenomenological philosophers by Deleuze, whose positions and concepts he affirms or criticizes. Three names are important in this respect: Sartre, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty. Deleuze judges Sartre predominately positively, Heidegger mostly negatively and Merleau-Ponty ambivalently. However, it is the connection to the latter which should turn out to be the most productive conceptually.

Deleuze understood his own practice of reading the philosophical classics as *radical hermeneutics*. In his own words, his interpretations aim at «taking an author from behind and giving him a child that would be his own offspring, yet monstrous». ³ He grants this “treatment” to Hume, Bergson, and especially to Kant, when in small monographs he bestows upon their thinking a consistence oftentimes not recognizable in their own writing. But this alone does not justify the strong claim to an impregnation of the philosopher by the reader. Significantly, Deleuze produces this consistency by departing from a point in the respective philosopher's writing that has been neglected, a sort of soft spot in that work. But in contrast to the method of deconstruction, this soft spot is not used against the respective philosophy, thus always arriving at the aporia of any philosophy. Rather, such a Deleuzian reconstruction or repetition is supposed to bring forth another (differential) philosophy.

3 DELEUZE 1995a, p. 6.

1. Concept and Dramatization (Deleuze and Sartre)

Deleuze's relation to the major phenomenologists of the 20th century, however, is at first not characterized by such an ultrahermeneutics. Because for Deleuze, Jean-Paul Sartre is simply the saviour of philosophy. This should come as a surprise considering how structuralist and poststructuralist theoreticians have attacked Sartre. As is well known, Lévi-Strauss and Foucault consider Sartre a stubborn subject-philosopher and unregenerate dialectician. In contrast, Deleuze praises him in a short text – there is hardly any mention of Sartre's name in the monographs – for the kind of image of an intellectual that he embodied. The short text is from 1964 and has the telling title: *He was my teacher*. It was written shortly after Sartre had rejected the Nobel prize for literature. Deleuze praises equally his political commitment and his philosophical approach:

In those days, who except Sartre knew how to say anything new? Who taught us new ways to think? As brilliant and profound as the work of Merleau-Ponty was, it was professorial and depended in many respects on Sartre's work. [...] The new themes, a particular new style, a new aggressive and polemical way of posing problems – these came from Sartre.⁴

It is especially the valorization of literature for philosophical thought which Deleuze gives Sartre credit for. He reversed the hierarchies. It is not that philosophy explains literature, but that literature opens up new fields for philosophy. In this respect, even Foucault has always been indebted to Sartre's model: In *The Order of Things* from 1966, he attributes to literature the capability of carrying within itself if not a special form of experience, then to some extent the very life of language or the being-in-itself of discourse. Like Foucault, Deleuze turned to the writings of de Sade, and in addition to those of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch. For Deleuze, de Sade's narrations describe the successful realization of Kant's practical philosophy, an illustration of the efforts of Enlightenment to outdo nature by rigorous reason. In Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs*, however, Deleuze recognizes the democratic side of the Enlightenment, the one that takes the contract as a point of departure for desire. And in Franz Kafka's story of the metamorphosis of Gregor Samsa into a bug Deleuze discovers the *dramatization* of a concept.

One has to credit Deleuze with the fact that (like Sartre) he did never conceive of literature as being merely a compliant tool for philosophy, but

4 DELEUZE 2004, p. 77.

emphasized it allowed for another form of thinking. Deleuze's key term is that of dramatization, which he presented to the French Association of Philosophy at the Sorbonne in a talk accompanying his professoral thesis *Difference and Repetition* which was published in 1968. Dramatization for Deleuze is the coming alive of a concept: The metamorphosis into a bug in Kafka, for example, is the dramatization of the concept of becoming minor according to Deleuze. This becoming minor then serves as a critique of classical ontologies, whose primary category of "being" always refers to a static universality.

With this philosophical notion of literature, Deleuze has given philosophy a new means of analysis. In *What is Philosophy?*, the last book that he and Félix Guattari co-wrote, they call this means "conceptual persona": A conceptual persona is a proto-literary figure that appears in philosophical texts not only to *illustrate* a concept, but to *dramatize* its function. Deleuze correctly talks of a "diagrammatism". This is to say, philosophy is not about representing (the world), but about bringing into relation the elements of a concept, and a conceptual persona may achieve just that. The first example Deleuze and Guattari mention is the Cartesian cogito. The ego or the 'I' in Descartes' *Meditationes* does not so much represent a doubting Descartes in his room, but introduces various states of the ego: Starting from a state of unfounded certainty, and moving via a state of doubt towards a state of affirmed knowledge. In this philosophical play, according to Deleuze, the "I" first turns into an idiot, before becoming a knower, inasmuch as the concept of *cogitans* is staged by means of the conceptual persona *cogito*: In this drama it is not Descartes who doubts, but the doubting I is part of the concept of the "I that thinks".

For Deleuze and Guattari, the same applies to Husserl's figure of the *alter ego*: Phenomenology, too, makes use of conceptual personae, in order to conceptually dramatize the irreducibility of the second person. They describe this staging as follows:

There is [...] a calm and restful world. Suddenly a frightened face looms up [...]. The other person appears here as neither subject nor object but as [...] a possible world, the possibility of a frightening world. This possible world is not real, or not yet, but it exists nonetheless. [...] Here [...] is a concept of the other that presupposes no more than the determination of a sensory world as condition. On this condition the other appears as the expression of a possible. The other is a possible world as it exists in a face that expresses it and takes shape in a language that gives it a reality.⁵

⁵ DELEUZE & GUATTARI 1994, p. 17.

Rather than to a Levinasian enactment, Deleuze here points towards respective passages in Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, where Sartre emphatically demonstrates relations of gaze(s) as the conditions of possibility for existence or extinction.

Deleuze argues that these dramatizations of concepts allow philosophy to pose *problems*; or, what is more, that it is only through these dramatizations that philosophy is capable of posing problems. It is not enough to say that philosophical problems are brought forth in the form of a question; rather, as Deleuze puts it, they *insist in* the concept. In respect to the phenomenological question of the other, this then implies the primacy of the concept over the problematization of the subject. Thus, the creation of concepts for Deleuze is the only task of the philosopher or the only "true" function of philosophy. Philosophy is not about examining the truth of statements of fact or propositions, but about the creation of concepts, by which a problem is posed.

2. Territory and Geophilosophy (Deleuze and Heidegger)

Martin Heidegger's conception of philosophy is very close to Deleuze's own, concerning this. Heidegger, too, contends that philosophy has deteriorated over time in its ability to subsume problems into concepts. Thus, Heideggerian *destruction* serves the purpose of clearing away the history of philosophy in order to retain the "true" understanding of being beneath the strata of thought. Because, according to Heidegger, since Plato philosophy has contented itself with merely giving other names to being ("idea", "thing-in-itself", "will"), rather than expressing the phenomenology of being, that is, the structurally essential elements of its experience. In this history of deterioration, Heidegger, too, sees central philosophical concepts coming close to propositional statements about being *as something*. Deleuze, who could agree completely here with Heidegger, instead criticizes him. Deleuze concedes that Heidegger recognized the essence of philosophical concepts, philosophical problems, and eventually the essence of thought; at the same time, however, Deleuze argues that Heidegger failed in keeping his concept of being free of representation or referential thought.

One indication for this, Deleuze finds in Heidegger's assessment of the figure of repetition in Nietzsche. This figure is where Heidegger locates one of the five criteria, the compliance with which suggests traditional, occidental metaphysics. All these criteria he sees fulfilled in Nietzsche: The "eternal

return of the same" in Nietzsche's metaphysics is, as Heidegger expresses it, the truth of the whole of being. Being is will to power, but the form of appearance of its truth is the eternal return. Preparing for *Difference and Repetition* – and the title of this work must be read as a direct answer to Heidegger's *Being and Time* from 1927 – Deleuze in his comments on Nietzsche repeatedly points out that in the passage on return it is never Zarathustra who speaks, but only the dwarfs or animals, who shout out into the world a parody of the concept of return. Nietzsche's dramatization shows precisely what the figure of repetition does not claim: namely the return of the identical. Repetition in Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche produces difference because (logically) identity is only conceivable on the basis of repetition: a = [equals] a. What is "the same", however, can never repeat, according to Deleuze, without changing. And it is precisely this thought, says Deleuze, which makes Zarathustra collapse in front of his animals.

However, Deleuze's critique of Heidegger does not only concern Heidegger's notions of being and difference. With acumen Deleuze analyses the debate concerning Heidegger's relation to Nazism. Paraphrasing Nietzsche he comes straight to the point: «Is there anything worse [...] than to find oneself facing a German when one was expecting a Greek?»⁶ Heidegger confuses "Führer" and "friend" (the philosopher as the friend of truth) when trying to retrieve Greek thought in and through the German language.

In his critique of Heidegger, Deleuze makes use of the concept of territoriality, which might well be his most important proposition (next to immanence). To be precise, territoriality is a contribution by Guattari, who in turn loans this concept from the behaviourist Edward Chace Tolman. Outside philosophy, territoriality denotes a cognitive and psycho-physical, as well as factual acquisition of land, usually by means of demarcation. A territory is determined by the relation to what phenomenology has called "Earth" since Husserl. However, while Husserl views earth as quintessentially solid and stable, for Deleuze and Guattari it is dynamic: The Earth, a rotating body within the universe, the surface of which has been exposed to geological transformations, like the continental drift, is anything but an immutable figure of reference. For Deleuze and Guattari, territoriality is man's attempt at wringing something fixed from this dynamic entity. The Earth itself is the agency which always deterritorializes: The Earth destabilizes the seemingly fixed structures of territory. Thus, Deleuze and Guattari refer to all philosophical approaches which construct Earth as *archè* as reterritorialization.

Deterritorialization and reterritorialization, then, are two opposing forces,

⁶ DELEUZE & GUATTARI 1994, p. 109.

which may already be perceived on less basal levels. Working with tools, for example, may be described as follows: The hand seizing the hammer deterritorializes it from its – as Heidegger would say – *Vorhandenheit* [presence-at-hand]. At the same time, the hammer is reterritorialized on the hand (as Heidegger would say, it now is *zuhanden* [ready-to-hand]), while the hand deterritorializes itself from the body in order to enter into a symbiosis with the tool. That is to say, the hand, too, reterritorializes itself on the tool. Rather than separating the modes of being of *Vorhandenheit* [presence-at-hand] and *Zuhandensein* [readiness-to-hand], as Heidegger would do, Deleuze and Guattari consider both to be the two sides of one and the same process.

When applied to Heidegger's descriptions of the functioning of the German language, this means that the German reterritorialises the Ancient Greek, which had first been deterritorialized in the course of the history of philosophy when its original meaning was lost. Deleuze and Guattari criticize Heidegger for only analysing one side of this process: For, along with the reterritorialization of the Greek in the German language there occurs a deterritorialization of the German. This is to say, a national language gets estranged and becomes a philosophical mode of expression. It no longer corresponds to "German" as a national identity, insofar as any kind of retrieval may only be had in exchange for a transformation.

Thus, the people of philosophy for Deleuze and Guattari is always an inferior people, a people in the process of becoming. Its identity must not be confused with a specific geopolitical nationality. This danger of confusion, of course, is located precisely in the nexus of language and nation. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the (*a priori*) inferiority of philosophy can be evinced by looking at cultural history, as philosophy as an institution – i.e. "science" – came about in a movement of deterritorialization: In the movement of flight of the first philosophers, who came from the despotic empires of the East to Asia Minor, into a milieu which allowed for a formation of philosophy. Unlike Hegelian historiography of philosophy, which views this incident as a *necessary* event, Deleuze and Guattari refer to it as a *contingent* meeting of immanence (that is philosophical thought as denial of transcendence) and external conditions: Democracy and capitalism.

In Deleuze and Guattari's words, here the relative deterritorialization of early capitalism encountered the absolute deterritorialization of thought. Exchange economy and philosophy work immanently, thus are congenial – they only differ in their respective aims: While capitalism aims at reterritorializing itself in an extant, majoritarian people, philosophy aims at reterritorializing itself in an inferior people that is in the process of becoming.

At this point, as an answer to the question as to what philosophy is, Deleuze and Guattari suggest the concept of *geophilosophy*. On the one hand this concept refers to Fernand Braudel's concept of *geohistoire*, a concept which takes into consideration "long wave" developments like social, cultural or even climate history, all operating beneath the level of "short wave" event history. On the other hand, this concept, as has already been mentioned, harks back to Husserl's idea of the Earth as a universal "ground-form", inscribed into every body-experience.

In France, Husserl's approach has been popularized mainly through Merleau-Ponty's lectures on nature. In these, Merleau-Ponty takes up Husserl's posthumously published fragment on the reversion of the Copernican revolution in which he had presented a phenomenological reterritorialization of Copernicus' modern, deterritorialized world view. (Merleau-Ponty in turn encouraged a philosophy as «transcendental geology».⁷) While Merleau-Ponty stressed Husserl's notion of an Earth-bound universal history – Husserl speaks of a «Urhistorie (*primal history*)»⁸ – to which all historical episodes are relative, Deleuze elevates this model to an image of (philosophical) thought as such: It has no origin (Greece), but only a milieu (the market or *agorà*).

Here, the mental physiognomy fits the external conditions, so to say. This may sound crude, but it can be illustrated nicely when you look at how Deleuze describes modern philosophy. Starting from the assumption that a concept does not refer to an object, but expresses a territorial relation, three kinds of philosophy may be delineated: French philosophy, German philosophy, and English philosophy. While French philosophy constructs the house that shall be erected on the ground (this refers to rationalism, which concerns the architecture of thought), Germans want to ascertain this ground and excavate it. It is only the English who can, according to Deleuze, set up camp everywhere. This refers to an understanding of empiricism as an art, which David Hume in his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* described as the ability to map out a «mental geography».⁹ For Hume, this is to say that the experience to be described can never be grounded, but only be presented in its typical context.

Here lies the key to understanding this surprisingly positive assessment of Hume's philosophy, and this attempt at a synthesis of phenomenology and empiri(ci)sm. Especially in his early works, Deleuze characterizes his own philosophy as «transcendental empiricism».¹⁰ I think, it is here that we can find

7 MERLEAU-PONTY 1968, p. 259.

8 HUSSERL 2006, p. 153.

9 HUME 1999, p. 93.

10 DELEUZE 1994, p. 144.

Deleuze's core understanding of phenomenology. Something, that was an aporia for Kant, namely the grounding in experience of categories of reason, for Deleuze turns into a philosophical potentiality: Philosophy is the description of these categories which are condensed in experience; and phenomenology is precisely this attempt to delineate the constituents of consciousness starting from experience.

In Deleuze's final text, *Immanence: A Life...* published two month before his suicide in November 1995, Deleuze returns to (t)his adaptation of empiri(ci)sm. In this essay, Deleuze for the first time explicitly draws on the central idea of Sartre, first formulated in *The Transcendence of the Ego* from 1936. In this text, Sartre argues for a «liberation of the Transcendental Field», meaning a liberation towards a «sphere of *absolute* existence».¹¹ For Sartre, Husserl's intentionality leads to the fact that consciousness has no interiority, but is always outside, in the world. Admittedly, here phenomenology gives way to existentialism, but Deleuze retrieves this Sartrean existentialism from the café, so to say, brings it back to philosophy, and turns it into a theory of the concept: When Sartre says the ego is an object of consciousness, rather than saying the ego is the owner of consciousness, Deleuze reads this as follows: Consciousness is a field in which the *me* merely appears – the *me* is never the foundation of this field. The Transcendental Field, so Deleuze,

can be distinguished from experience in that it doesn't refer to an object or belong to a subject [...]. It appears therefore as a pure stream of a-subjective consciousness, a pre-reflexive impersonal consciousness, a qualitative duration of consciousness without a self.¹²

This is precisely what Husserl meant when he said that a phenomenological reduction of claims to validity must exempt neither God nor the World nor the ego. The subject is the object of consciousness and thus secondary to what Deleuze with Bergson calls “life” – or, with Husserl, (the subject is) a “transcendence in immanence”. «Transcendence», writes Deleuze, «is always a product of immanence».¹³ This is why Deleuze may subsume under immanence something that is not interiority but exteriority: Immanence does not refer to a solipsistic consciousness, but to the process of insisting. Philosophy becomes a philosophy of life when its concepts give expression to this *insistence*.

¹¹ SARTRE 1957, p. 93 and 96.

¹² DELEUZE 2001, p. 25.

¹³ DELEUZE 2001, p. 31.

3. Flesh and Folding (Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty)

Deleuze's reception of Merleau-Ponty would surely be worth a book of its own, but I would like to focus on a couple of aspects to show what direction a further exploration could take. In the course of this here only marginally is explained which way terms have taken from Merleau-Ponty to Deleuze. First and foremost this refers to similarities in structure and explicit mentionings by Deleuze. The starting point is the common concept of philosophy, before turning to the discussion of individual figures and metaphors, which point to a conformity of Deleuze's and Merleau-Ponty's ontology.

Concerning the first point (the concept of philosophy): It is quite interesting that Deleuze has adopted the idea that philosophy must define itself via its relation to non-philosophy from Merleau-Ponty. In the lecture on the *Possibility of Philosophy* given in 1959 which also marks the first drafts of the *The Visible and the Invisible* (the working title of which had been *The Origin of Truth*) Merleau-Ponty designates the time span after Hegel and until Husserl as the era of "non-philosophy". Especially Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, but also Marx belong to this period. Deleuze changes Merleau-Ponty's indecision concerning the evaluation of this philosophical time-out by stating that philosophy does not only have to clear its relation to the outside of philosophy, but is necessarily related to non-philosophy. Therefore it might even be said that the philosophical project of Husserl's phenomenology (and theoreticians in his succession) represents the attempt to integrate that which the counter-philosophy of the 19th century had considered to be incompatible with philosophy. And not only integrating it but making it the point of departure: Life, existence, phenomena. Hence, phenomenology is thinking for, with and outside of philosophy.

The figure of "non-philosophy" refers to a similarity between Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty in yet another respect: Examining the notes for Merleau-Ponty's lecture from 1953/54, *Materials for a Theory of History*, in the vicinity of which his texts *Adventure of Dialectics* can be placed, one finds that Merleau-Ponty is talking here explicitly of history as a «milieu of life [*milieu de vie*]»,¹⁴ hence an "environment". Merleau-Ponty opposes this understanding to the notion of a god-given course of history. Thus he underlines the contingency of history as the meeting of inner and outer conditions, which has been emphasized by

14 MERLEAU-PONTY 1988, p. 96.

Deleuze later on.

This understanding of the term “milieu” is structurally connected to the notion of mixture, which Merleau-Ponty thematizes in the opening of the chapter on the chiasm in *The Visible and the Invisible*: Subject and object never appear to be (phenomenologically) separated at first but are only to exist in a merge (the chiasm). Merleau-Ponty writes that philosophy has to «install itself in a locus where [...] ['subject' and 'object'] have not yet been distinguished, in experience».¹⁵ Merleau-Ponty explains the chiasm as «an intimacy as close as between the sea and the strand».¹⁶ The world of experience of the infant is characterized by Merleau-Ponty literally as a «bloc of [...] life»¹⁷ of subject and object. What Merleau-Ponty, who held a chair for child psychology for some time, is directing here against the stage-model in the theory of development of the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget will be important for aesthetics in particular. Because Merleau-Ponty has named Cézanne to have been the one to explore the chiasm of subject and object by way of the artistic experiment. Contrary to contemporary efforts of the arts, Cézanne was not interested in a fundamental decomposition of perspective. Even though Merleau-Ponty uses him as an example against a method of representation that uses the central perspective, in which objects can only appear as objects for a subject, perspective is still contained in Cézanne's paintings. Rather, he combines the perspectival view of the subject with an almost naive representation of artifacts. Plates on a table, for example, or the rim of a jar (even though they are clearly seen from an oblique angle) are not elliptical but round. This means that Cézanne carries the objects into the perspectival painting *as they are* (as objects of the world of lived experience) *in themselves*. This is exactly what happens in the drawings of children: They show the world from a topological point of view (from the object), and not from a perspectival one (from the subject). For Merleau-Ponty, Cézanne's paintings are displaying an exemplary crossing of the cogito with the world: The ego sees the world in perspective, but the objects come towards it from out of the world.

In the context of his phenomenological aesthetics, Deleuze has chosen the term “bloc of sensation” for this. Sometimes Deleuze and Guattari also talk about «*blocs of becoming*»,¹⁸ denoting the mode of being of the work of art which is always at the same time affective as well as perceptive. If the philosopher is in charge of creating concepts, the artist is in charge of creating blocks of sensation. This is true for the fine arts as well as for literature and music: «By

15 MERLEAU-PONTY 1968, p. 130.

16 MERLEAU-PONTY 1968, pp. 130-1.

17 MERLEAU-PONTY 1968, p. 12.

18 DELEUZE & GUATTARI 1987, p. 237.

means of the material, the aim of art is to wrest the percept from perceptions of objects and the states of a perceiving subject, to wrest the affect from affections as the transition from one state to another: To extract a bloc of sensations, a pure being of sensations». ¹⁹ What they want to hint at by using Peirce's terms of the "percept" and the analogously formed term "affect" is that art extracts the receptive and spontaneous elements from perception, separates them from the perceiver to let them have an autonomous existence in the work of art. This very disposition of art is the reason that phenomenology not only *can* turn towards art but *has to*, because for Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty art follows the same project as phenomenology. Only it does so by means which must not be those of language: Art "practices" *epoché* (in this case towards the carrier of perception) and displays phenomena as such.

Deleuze writes: «[P]henomenology must become the phenomenology of art because the immanence of the lived to a transcendental subject must be expressed in transcendent functions that not only determine experience in general but traverse the lived itself here and now, and are embodied in it by constituting living sensations. [...] A curious Fleshism inspires this final avatar of phenomenology and plunges it into the mystery of the incarnation. It is both a pious and a sensual notion, a mixture of sensuality and religion, without which, perhaps, flesh could not stand up by itself [...].» ²⁰ Hence it was obvious for Deleuze that phenomenology sooner or later would have to become a phenomenology of art and encounter the christological topic of the flesh. In its disposition it is the elimination of validity and transcendence, which means of God, ego, body, world and also of the Other. What remains is the pure immanence of becoming in the process of differentiation. Flesh (or whatever it will be called) is in this case the substrate of becoming.

Deleuze's Cézanne is named Francis Bacon. It seems as if Deleuze wanted to call after Merleau-Ponty that in Cézanne the true painter of the flesh has not yet been found. Nearly all of Bacon's paintings display bodies that are deformed in curious ways. The «*spirituality*» ²¹ that Deleuze talks about is pushed to its borders in Bacon's paintings and thus becomes all the more visible. This is shown in a provocative way in Bacon's study of Velasquez's portrait of the pope. Bacon transforms the static representation of power into a kind of negative transubstantiation. The flesh is flowing from the pope's bones. He seems to be sitting in an ejector seat that is catapulted into the air rather than sitting on a throne as he does in Velasquez' painting. The successor of St.

¹⁹ DELEUZE & GUATTARI 1994, p. 167.

²⁰ DELEUZE & GUATTARI 1994, p. 178.

²¹ DELEUZE 2003, p. 46.

Peter is really transforming into a piece of meat, into a lump of flesh. The expression “flesh of the world” can only be used metaphorically with respect to Cézanne, Bacon's images, however, are truly showing the bare flesh. At the same time the phenomenological understanding of corporeality is being radicalized: If the interweaving of the body with the world is taken seriously, then the body must become indistinguishable from the world and is, quasi, dissolved into it.

Deleuze and Guattari have chosen the term «Body without Organs»²² for this cosmic or opened body. Such a “body” for them designates a kind of virtual corporeality, a condition in which the body has not been assigned to certain tasks. It does not function, it is not a tool – it is without organs. And this spot marks the interrelation between aesthetics and ethics: If the purpose of art lies in isolating perception in the form of percepts and affects, then the ethical imperative demands to dispose oneself of one's organs. The phenomenological *epoché* is to be practiced on one's very own body.

Concluding I would like to address one last common feature and, after having talked about aesthetics and ethics, I would like to thematize ontology as well. A helpful approach can be found in Merleau-Ponty's concept of “folding”. It is in particular in his book on Leibniz that Deleuze joins the topological ontology of Merleau-Ponty. Merleau-Ponty has described the being of man as a folding of being or a fold *within being*. This was directed against Sartre who defined man with reference to Kojève's reading of Hegel as a «hole in being».²³ One can read about foldings or foliaceousness in the context of Merleau-Ponty's so called «intraontology»:²⁴ This term designates the attempt to express the Cartesian dualism of inside (thinking) and outside (being) by complex spatial figures. The concept of “folding” lends a spatial figure to the notion of intentionality. The being-to-the-world is thus understood as a protuberance, a drapery in the fabric of the world instead of the subject as an instance exempted from the world.

Deleuze claims, that this idea of folding has emerged in the Baroque. Especially its architecture and mathematics pointed to an alteration in the understanding of the world and its perception. Put into terms from art-history: The flat space of the image is being displaced by a deep space. As the art historian Heinrich Wölfflin has noticed in *Principles of Art History* (1915) for the realm of architecture, representations using a central perspective adhere to a thinking stressing the foreground. All figures are lined up on the same level,

22 DELEUZE & GUATTARI 1987, p. 150.

23 MERLEAU-PONTY 2012, p. 223.

24 MERLEAU-PONTY 1968, p. 225.

space appears despite or because of its perspectivity as being “flat”. It was only with the staggered arrangement in the Baroque that paintings, by means of the placing of objects, created a substantial impression of depth. Wölfflin called them «plane type» and «recessional type»²⁵ of pictorial spaces, Deleuze and Guattari called the two stylistic extremes «“smooth” space» and «“striated” space»,²⁶ the latter standing for Renaissance, the former for Baroque art.

What phenomenology can learn from the descriptions of art history is, according to Deleuze, to no longer understand being substantialistically as either one or another, but to understand phenomena as the result of counter rotating process of smoothing and striation (parallel to the reciprocal act of reterritorialization and deterritorialization). Thus Deleuze is ultimately meeting Merleau-Ponty's demands for a topological thinking, which Deleuze thought to be realized in the work of one of Merleau-Ponty's major critics: Michel Foucault. It is Foucault's archeology, which Deleuze considered to be able to understand man as «foldings»²⁷ of the modern episteme, as protuberances of a discursive formation. And as a matter of fact it can be shown that Foucault's archeology can be aligned with the phenomenological project to reach the constituents of being by way of going back from the given. It speaks in Deleuze's favor that he does not see a break between phenomenology and structuralism but that he understands structuralism as an attempt to give phenomenology a monstrous child...

Translated by Philipp Hofmann

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²⁵ WÖLFFLIN 1950, p. 73.

²⁶ DELEUZE & GUATTARI 1987, p. 353.

²⁷ DELEUZE 1988, p. 97.

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