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The Fold: Musical Monads and Baroque Assemblages

Abstract: *The Fold is a collaborative composing project staged in Singapore (2013) and Cologne (2014) involving musicians from disparate stylistic and cultural backgrounds. The musicians come together to compose written scores that are subsequently used for improvisation during performances. This essay frames the project as a musical manifestation of conceptual trajectories articulated in Gilles Deleuze's The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque. The first section contemplates Leibniz's psychic geometry and the monad as a musical score. Following this, a machinic analysis of the music created during the project sparked by Deleuze's notion of the refrain is offered. In the last section, I return to The Fold and situate its compositional, improvisational and performative practices within Deleuze's geophilosophical and nomad thought.*

Practicum: A psychic geometry

I possess a clear and distinguished zone of expression because I have primitive singularities, ideal virtual events to which I am destined. From this moment deduction unwinds: I have a body because I have a clear and distinguished zone of expression. In fact, that which I express clearly, the moment having come, will concern my body, and will act most directly on my body, surroundings, circumstances and environment.¹

The musicians gathered in *The Fold* express primitive singularities in the form of composed (written) documentations, or virtual (graphic) events. The method of collaboratively composing (in) *The Fold* enables them to engage the music with their body, instrument, and significant musical experience to reach thresholds of intensity, conscious and unconscious, ambient and corporeal, folding forward into the written gesture of the compositional idea, which, in turn, acts directly on their bodies, surroundings, circumstances and environment, and, in particular, on the ensemble. The musicians, who are monads, enter the project with distinctive musical and cultural backgrounds as well as with a “number of unique, incorporeal, ideal events” that have yet to put bodies and instruments into play within the process where their past experiences are “primary predicates that constitute a

¹ Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* [1988], trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: UMP, 2007): 98; further references in the text abbreviated as “FLB.”

zone of clear expression, or subdivisions” (*FLB*, 86).² These individuals express distinctive qualities through their interaction with their monad-instruments. However, whilst the individual and the instrument are subdivisions of the world, each has traces of expressive qualities of the entire world within each subdivision – the outward folding of the world within. The individual monads may not be aware of what makes them distinct because they are finite and closed off from one another. Simultaneously, they maintain elements that represent the world – which is infinite. These “worldly” elements exist as subliminal “perceptions” or “representatives” – as minute perspectives within each musician-monad; “a lapping of waves, a rumor, a fog, or a mass of dancing particles of dust” (*FLB*, 86). During the process of composing the music in *The Fold*, the musicians were given five preconceived thresholds to respond to with musical ideas, designed as geometric macroscopic points of reference that define a “spatium of intensities” where “the *macroscopic* distinguishes perceptions and appetites that are the passage from one perception to another. Such is the great composite folds, or draped forms” (*FLB*, 87). The musicians navigate through this landscape creating motifs guided by points along an allegorical curve of qualities and thresholds represented by windows placed in the *Present, Above, Below, Past and Future* of a metaphorical axis.³ These points in themselves are not fixed as objects or even archetypes; they are maneuvered by the musicians and expressed from each of their inherent perspectives, which may include the musicians’ lived, physical or phenomenal position in the moment or in the world, his or her experienced or imagined past, present or future. The *Present, Above, Below, Past and Future* are Deleuzian *events*. They are conglomerates of differential relations, accumulative forces influenced by “tiny perceptions [that] are as much the passage from one perception to another as they are components of each perception” (*FLB*, 87). This axis of qualities and thresholds projects a psychological geometry into the landscape of micro-perceptions within the individual musician-monads. It allows them to articulate their previous hallucinatory perceptions into (clear) zones of expression.⁴ For Deleuze, “[a]ll consciousness is a matter of threshold”; what is

2 In the Singapore *Fold*, the musicians came from Japanese, Serbian, Singapore Chinese and Australian lineage with Jazz, Balkan, Experimental, Classical, Electronic and Carnatic (South Indian) musical influences. In the Cologne *Fold*, the musicians came from Iran, Germany and Australia with classical, experimental, jazz, improvisation, and traditional Iranian music influences.

3 Bringing into play the microscopic relationships between the curve and the straight line in Leibniz’ geometry. A measuring of points and thresholds is taking place along this metaphorical curve but at a subliminal or psychic level.

4 Deleuze points out that “*Every perception is hallucinatory because perception has no object*. Our conscious perception has no object” (*FLB*, 93), or physical reality. It can only surmise an

interesting is “why the threshold is marked where it is” (*FLB*, 89). The thresholds are “affective qualities, confused or even obscured perceptions that resemble something by virtue of Leibniz’ projective geometry.”⁵ They are “natural signs” resembling neither extension nor even movement, but “matter in extension, vibrations, elasticities [. . .] tendencies of efforts” in motion (*FLB*, 96).

In the context of *The Fold* project, the responses of the musicians to the psychic geometry of *Present, Above, Below, Past and Future* are musical gestures in the form of melodies, harmony, rhythm or noise. The macro points of the *Present, Above, Below, Past and Future* framework are not ends in themselves; it is *between* these points of reference and the differential relationships created by them that certain thresholds of consciousness manifest from within each musician-monad. By traversing the “in between,” tiny perceptions are revealed, collected and expressed in written musical forms reflecting the function of Leibniz’ differential calculus as described by Deleuze:

Differential relations always select minute perceptions that play a role in each case, and bring to light or clarify the conscious perception that comes forth. Thus differential calculus is the psychic mechanism of perception, the automatism that at once and inseparably plunges into obscurity and determines clarity: a selection of minute, obscure perceptions and a perception that moves in clarity. (*FLB*, 90)

The musicians navigate and respond to these spheres or thresholds, articulating their perceptions by composing *Cantus Firmi*⁶ or fixed melodies. Each note of their Cantus Firmus illustrates little foldings of disquiet, a “spiritualising of dust” (of the compositional process) manifested in perceptions that are not necessarily located in one of these “natural signs” represented by *Present, Above, Below, Past and Future*. They are sounds *prehended* in the passage from one “natural sign” to another that only come to be understood as a perception of the macro-point through the relationships constructed along micro-points on

idea of reality through the differential relations of these microperceptions intersecting and folding within the subconscious realms of the individual monad.

5 In comparison to Newton’s calculus, Leibniz posited that numbers could actually be infinite whilst, for Newton, the numbers remained “very small” but nevertheless finite. The results of the theoretical calculus in both cases were the same. However, by allowing there to be a *possibility* of the infinite in his version, Leibniz created the idea of a projective geometry, a vision of geometry as an abstract concept where the mind could “only” imagine or project what was potentially limitless, that which could not be defined by finite numbers and was therefore hallucinatory, a geometrical perspective that was subjective and transitory, not objectively represented in mathematical terms alone.

6 *Cantus Firmus* – the first series of notes composed from which all other permutations arise, especially in the composition of fugues and other early forms of Baroque music.

the curve of each note's phrase and the *contra punctum* (the musical relationship of one note to another) of the Cantus Firmus. The notes selected by each musician and their inter-relationships within *contra punctum* are "engaged in differential relations and produce the quality that issues forth at the given threshold of consciousness" (FLB, 89). For example, when a musician decides to compose the note "A," "A" is in a differential relation to the musician – the selection of "A" in difference to deciding upon any other note – "B," "F," or "D#." "A" is also in differential relation to all other notes in the Cantus Firmus in terms of its harmonic meaning – "A" is differentially related to "B," which is differentially related to "C" and so on.⁷ Moreover, the notes in the Cantus Firmus become contained musical gestures, a collection of points along a curve, tangents that vaguely measure an infinitesimal projection of the clear zone of expression of each musician.

During this first stage, the musicians are encouraged to respond spontaneously in isolation to the thresholds of *Present, Above, Below, Past and Future* in composing their Cantus Firmi. Here, "each monad acts spontaneously, without prompting from without."⁸ In the second stage of the composing process, where these melodies are collected and arranged into larger musical structures, these tiny perceptive refrains of Cantus Firmi are *detrterritorialized* and *reterritorialized* in the process of concertation. In addition to spontaneity, there is a "harmonious arrangement of all monads among one another," a harmony Deleuze calls "concertation" (a harmony, he suggests, that may be seen as the analogue of Baroque music's "concertant style"); concertation is, for Deleuze, "an accord of spontaneities themselves, an accord among accords."⁹ In Fig. 1, below, is an example of a Cantus Firmus composed by the tuba player Carl Ludwig Hübsch from Cologne responding to *The Future* threshold. Accompanying the musical notation are some performance notes by the composer/performer. I will return to this particular Cantus Firmus later to show how it was integrated and arranged into the score.

⁷ Deleuze, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, suggests a transformational process during the act of composition and the choices that composers make between writing one note or another, with the notes transcending themselves into "becoming" the composer. For example: Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, "Berg's B in *Wozzeck*, Schumann's A." *A Thousand Plateaus* [1980], trans. Brian Massumi (London and New York: Continuum, 2004): 327; further references in the text abbreviated as "TP."

⁸ Ronald Bogue, "The New Harmony," in *Gilles Deleuze: The Intensive Reduction*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (London and New York: Continuum, 2009): 39.

⁹ Bogue, "The New Harmony," 40.

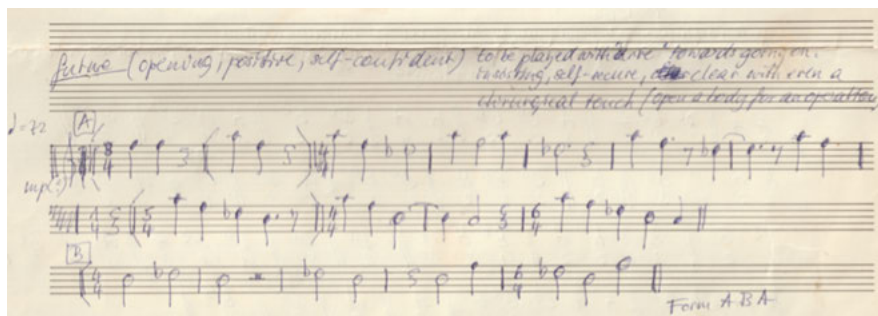


Fig. 1: The Fold Köln Project – “The Future.” Cantus Firmus composed by Carl Ludwig Hübsch. Courtesy of the artist.

In chapter nine of *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* entitled “The New Harmony” Deleuze cleverly plays with the words “concertation” and “concertante.” Concertante is a style of composition developed in the late Baroque with prominent solo parts for musicians that interact with the ensemble arrangement. The use of the word in this context describes the process of finding accords, that is, forms and relationships:

For Leibniz, pre-established harmony has many formulas, each in respect to the spot through which the fold is passing: sometimes it is among principles, mechanisms, or finality, or even continuity and indiscernibles; at others, between the floors, between Nature and Grace, between the material universe and the soul, or between each soul and its organic body; and at others again, among substances, simple substances and corporeal or composite substances. (FLB, 132–133)

During the second phase of arranging, the Cantus Firmi offered by each musician are collected; they are deterritorialized/reterritorialized under the titles of each threshold, for example, the refrains composed by each musician in response to *The Present* macro point are arranged together into one composition as are the refrains created in response to *The Above* macro point. The musical function of each Cantus Firmus within the arrangement is approached from an infinite perspective and utilized without a priori. Each refrain is swiftly juxtaposed with the next – an individual refrain can emerge as a bass riff or within a chord sequence; the rhythmic elements of the refrain can be isolated into a drum part or as the main melody itself.¹⁰

¹⁰ This approach to composing is also analogous to Deleuze’s “multilineal system” of *becoming*, from *A Thousand Plateaus*: the process “draws a horizontal, melodic line, the bass line,

Whilst rehearsing these arrangements in the third stage of the process, the Cantus Firmi are further developed collectively through negotiation and revision – to deal with “principles, mechanisms [and] indiscernibles.” The pieces are formed into quasi concertante *style* works which means that they are composed into *tutti* (everyone playing together) as well as solo sections featuring the players in the ensemble as improvising soloists whilst the rest of the ensemble performs an accompaniment. In Fig. 2 we see Hübsch’ Cantus Firmus integrated into the full score with the other musicians’ ideas. In this instance, Hübsch is actually performing (follow the Tuba line in the score and compare it to the hand-written line in Fig. 1) his own Cantus Firmus whilst the other musicians are sometimes doubling (playing the same music) his musical idea or providing accompaniment. This process of composition was so prevalent in and intrinsic to the Baroque era that “many musicologists prefer to speak of the ‘concertant’ style instead of Baroque music” (*FLB*, 132), when describing the music of the period. This style of composing, especially when the solo parts are improvised, has echoes in jazz music, along with many other folk musics around the world. Analogous to these traditions, the “pieces” are not fixed structures, as they became historically in the Classical period. They are real-time sites of negotiation between the performer-composers in the ensemble.

The image shows a musical score excerpt for five instruments: B. Cl., B. Sx., Tuba, Vln., and a percussion line. The score is written in 3/4 time and features a complex texture with multiple melodic lines. The Tuba part is the central focus, with a Cantus Firmus line. The other instruments provide accompaniment and doubling. Dynamic markings include *fp*, *mp*, and *mf*. The percussion line is marked with *fp*, *mp*, and *mf*.

Fig. 2: Excerpt from the Full Score of “The Future.” Courtesy of the artist.

upon which other melodic lines are superposed; points are assigned that enter into relations of counterpoint between lines ... it draws a vertical, harmonic line or plane, which moves along the horizontals but is no longer dependent upon them; it runs from high to low and defines a chord capable of linking up with the following chords” (*TP*, 325).

As a form of music making *The Fold* project harks back to pre-classical ideas in western music, dissolving the importance and hierarchy of the score and the composer, and the divisions of labor amongst musicians. In the pre-classical era, performers were composers and improvisers in equal measure. However, the process initiates more than a revision of relationships between musicians performing in an ensemble. As Deleuze observes:

The focal point of the distinction of “intrinsic singularities” (*FLB*, 15) articulated within a Leibnizian geometry of perspective in *The Fold* is that this is at the same time an outline of points of view of perceptions. Change along the path of curvature is read as a tendency of variation to infinity. This informs the abstract level of the problem of reading change: putting elements into play, thereby including the whole, is a form of the continuity of variation from a certain point of view.¹¹

The maps or “scores” constructed from the abovementioned process are Baroque perspectives that create a temporary linear focus and variable relations throughout the structure. However, these maps are created in the process of arranging. There are no pre-conceived “forms” (or memory) that the melodies adhere to; the maps resemble written out “comprovisations” (composed improvisations). They are what Deleuze describes as “haecceity, becoming, the innocence of becoming” (*TP*, 326). The compositions are made up of a flow of disparate melodic ideas that have emerged from each of the musician’s singular perspectives, unveiling “in a single movement [their] unfathomable depths of tiny and moving folds” (*FLB*, 93). Moreover, the improvisations created by the musicians in performance, in the fourth stage of the project, are not only created as extended or quantified “stuff” – extensions of the written music. They act on, and become, variations of the “singularities” – between the geometric thresholds of *Present, Above, Below, Past and Future*.¹² Through improvisation, the subjective perspective or “point of view” of the musician’s position (as co-author – *improv-iser*) within this geometry, enables this “linear focus” to unfold from the materials within the compositions, initiating unique intensities. During the performance these singularities are obliterated into intensive linear relationships. The operative function of the score, in a Baroque sense, is a site of transformation and variation within the performance, that embodies the collective creativity of the group. The music “lives” in the moment of performance as the musicians are compelled to react to one another’s variable intensities. Moreover, what is heard is the intensive quantity

¹¹ Keith Robinson, “Towards a Political Ontology of the Fold: Deleuze, Heidegger, Whitehead and the “Fourfold” Event,” in *Deleuze and The Fold: A Critical Reader*, ed. Sjoerd van Tuinen, Niamh McDonnell (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010): 15–116.

¹² Robinson, “Towards a Political Ontology,” 194.

made up of the sum of infinitely small parts. But instead of the score prescribing and defining the curvature, and measuring the rate of change, improvisation enables the musicians to explore the infinite micro-perceptions and “singularities” between them and the music.

The monad as musical score

In *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, Deleuze uses the allegory of a two-story house to architectonically expand upon Leibniz's monad in the chapter entitled “The Pleats of Matter.” In *The Fold* project, during rehearsals, the musicians loudly warm up, on the second story of this house, in a windowless dark chamber, the din creating an impenetrable mesh, a tangle of sound, an unsettling anarchic noise “resonating as if it were a musical salon translating the visible movements below into sounds above” (*FLB*, 4). *The Fold* ensemble creates pre-classical clamor, melody, dissonance, and harmony. This non-hierarchical collective music making is very different to the post-classical period of music making, where a conductor would customarily enter the room with a composer in toe, with their “specific tools” in order to fashion this noise (force) into a source of “purpose and power.”¹³ For Leibniz, “monads are limited, not as to their objects, but with respect to the modifications of their knowledge of them. Monads all go confusedly to infinity, to the whole; but they are limited and differentiated by the degrees of their distinct perception.”¹⁴ The monad, for Leibniz, is a closed, independent, distinctly individual self-contained object. Within the monad is a “world of infinite folds-within-folds, of monadic minds/spirits inter-folded with matter and topological folds of reversible insides and outsides.”¹⁵ However, from a Deleuzien perspective, “the harmony of that world can no longer be conceived as a unity, since our inter-folded universe is not circumscribed and complete.”¹⁶ For Leibniz, each monad is a world selected by God from all possible worlds, and their perspective on other worlds is limited as is a room without windows. The upper story of the Baroque house described above is dark and windowless and characterizes the Leibnizian monad – a space of infinite folds-within-folds,

¹³ Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* [1985], trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: UMP, 2006): 6.

¹⁴ G.W. Leibniz, “The Monadology,” in *Discourses on Metaphysics and Other Essays* [1646–1716], trans. Daniel Garber, Roger Ariew (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1991): 77.

¹⁵ Bogue, “New Harmony,” 65.

¹⁶ Bogue, “New Harmony,” 65.

entangled sound, a journey to infinity. Deleuze adds another room to the house on the lower story, and by doing so opens the monad to perspectives outside itself. The musicians “translate the visible movements below (that have come from the outside through small openings) into sounds above”; here

the monad can no longer include the entire world as if it were in a closed circle that can be modified by projection. Instead, the monad now opens itself on a trajectory or an expanding spiral that moves further and further from a centre. (FLB, 137)

The importance of the written scores – Beethoven’s 5th Symphony has commonly been cited as a “ground zero” of this concept in musicology – as an objective representation of music and as a Leibnizian monad. As Lydia Goehr suggests in *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, it “came into being in the late eighteenth century, giving an ‘institutionalised centrality’ to music making, and contributed to the important historical idea of the ‘musical work’.”¹⁷

[P]rior to 1800 there were functioning concepts of composition, performance and notation in musical practice, just as there were after that time. This is the continuity. The discontinuity lies in the fact that their significance, and the conceptual relations in which these concepts stood to one another, differed across the two time periods [...] the work-concept had a regulative function in the latter, but not in the earlier period, despite the presence of continuity in both theory and practice.¹⁸

Musical score, prior to 1800 were generally incomplete maps with signposts to the general ideas of what the composition was about; they were “functioning concepts” approached with a fluidity of interpretation that allowed musicians to contribute more creatively during the performance. Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frideric Handel would often bring ideas and sketches to a performance and lead the ensemble in performing variations and extemporizations on these themes. It was commonplace for the audience to be much more interactive in these performances and call out requests for the musicians to perform well-known melodies. The expectation was that the musicians would improvise with the material. The thrilling aspect of the performance lay in the virtuosity and inventiveness of the musicians’ improvisation, not in how exactly they reproduced pre-composed notation. Importantly, the rupture created by the score as the objective, absolute version of music itself, separated composers and performers into the divisions of labor we know today creating the inherent power structures that accompany it.

¹⁷ Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* [1992] (New York: Oxford UP, 2007): 96.

¹⁸ Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, 108.

Composers prior to the late eighteenth century created and performed their music simultaneously by using a form of notation that guided the performance, a broad outline to be filled in by improvising performers. The notion that the score and the performance could be mutually exclusive is something that developed with the invention of a universal notation of music and the proliferation of the printing press. Musicians found that they could earn more money by writing the music down and publishing it than by creating the music spontaneously through performances alone. This tendency also coincided with more musicians owning the copyright of their work as opposed to the copyright being owned by a nobleman who employed them, the church, or the state. When the musical score evolved into what Goehr describes as a “regulative function”; it became a fixed reference point that emerged “alongside the rise of ideals of accurate notation and perfect compliance. In this process, the work-concept achieved the most central position”¹⁹ within the paradigm of information communication between musicians. Goehr also points out that

[i]n their normative function, regulative concepts determine, stabilize, and order the structure of practices. Within classical music practice we compose works, produce performances of works, appreciate, analyse, and evaluate works.²⁰

The musical work as monad and a “regulative concept” also prescribes opposing rules; for instance, on the use of improvisation and transcription. From this point onwards, the use of improvisation as a form of music making became marginalized, devalued, and excluded from the so-called serious music making. According to Goehr, the idea of a score as a “work of art” in itself “has its roots in a peculiarly romantic conception of composition, performance, notation, and reception, a conception that was formed alongside the emergence of music as an autonomous fine art.”²¹ By narrowing the idea of music into products like scores, and latterly records, tapes, and CDs, the importance of the process of making music through performance, and, indeed, the importance of musicians who focus on this process as improvisers, has drastically diminished.

Significantly, the Leibnizian monad as score evolved after the Baroque period, a period noted for its sensuality, exuberance, and intense taste of life. As Deleuze explains a propos Goehr:

¹⁹ Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, 103.

²⁰ Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, 102.

²¹ Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, 113.

The Baroque refers not to an essence but rather to an operative function, to a trait. It endlessly produces folds. It does not invent things: there are all kinds of folds coming from the East, Greek, Roman, Romanesque, Gothic, Classical folds. [. . .] Yet the Baroque trait twists and turns its folds, pushing them to an infinity, fold over fold, one upon the other. The Baroque fold unfurls all the way to infinity. (FLB, 3)

As the score monad evolved into a regulative functioning object during the Classical period, the infinitely unfurling folds of the Baroque became standardized into self-contained hierarchical forms. Deleuze suggests in *A Thousand Plateaus* that “[a]ll of Baroque lies brewing beneath Classicism: the task of the classical artist is God’s own, that of organizing chaos; and the artists only cry is Creation! Creation! The Tree of Creation!” (TP, 373). The classical composer becomes the gatekeeper between the chaosmos and the score-monad, the creator and controller of ideas and the author that claims ownership over these ideas in his exclamation; “Creation!” For Deleuze:

Classicism refers to a form-matter relation, or rather a form-substance relation (substance is precisely a matter endowed with form). Matter is organized, and hierarchized in relation to one another, each of which takes charge of a greater or lesser amount of matter. (TP, 373)

In the Baroque, the process of creating music through improvisation that exulted in one of the primary forms of composition at the time, the fugue,²² which

is at once the horizontal melody that endlessly develops all of its lines in extension, and the vertical harmony that establishes the inner spiritual unity or the summit, but it is impossible to know where the one ends and the other begins (FLB, 127),

²² Rather than adhering to a preconceived formula or fixed template like the classical Sonata Form where there are strict rules governing what happens melodically and harmonically at the beginning (Exposition), in the middle (Development), and at the end of a piece (Recapitulation), the Fugue is a form of composition that utilizes up to five themes (*Cantus Firmi*) that are used to create intricate polyphony in relation to a linear development that occurs whilst the composer is composing the music, aka “through – composition.” In the example of the fugue process, “matter” or for example the infinite trajectories of a melody, *directs* the development of the composition as opposed to the composer fitting a melody into a pre-ordained form like Sonata that dictates more strictly, prescribing musical decisions for the composer. “But, precisely, Baroque music is what can *extract harmony from melody*, and can always restore the higher unity toward which the arts are moving as many melodic lines: this very same elevation of harmony makes up the most general definition of what can be called Baroque music” (FLB, 128).

was replaced by the classical sonata form. Here, matter (melody and harmony) is tonally hierarchized, in subjugation of and in strict relation to a preconceived structure, stressing the importance of the form over the content or matter.

The assemblage

In *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* Deleuze and Guattari develop the neologism “machinic assemblage” to rethink ethics. Claire Colebrook, in *Gilles Deleuze*, sums up this project in the following way:

We tend to begin our thinking from some presupposed whole: such as man, nature or an image of the universe as an interacting organism with a specific end. This allows our ethics to be reactive: we form our ethics on the basis of some pre-given unity. The machine by contrast allows for an active ethics, for we do not presuppose an intent, identity or end. Deleuze uses the machine to describe a production that is immanent: not the production of something by someone – but production for the sake of production itself, an ungrounded time and becoming.²³

Analyzing the music of *The Fold* from this point of view enables an operative-active perspective to develop. Thinking about the scores produced by the musicians opens up an ethical position that is not based on a pre-given unity – a conventional musical a priori. From this position, the musician’s offerings can be seen as not entirely subjective whilst responding to the conceptual framework. The individual as composer is subverted here as there is no wholeness and no overview. Their responses occur in “ungrounded time and becoming.” The score shifts from existing as a regulative system of preconceived ideas from a singular subjective position to functioning as an operative mechanism, a ticking over, that “has no subjectivity or organizing centre” and “is nothing more than the connections and productions it makes; it is what it does.”²⁴ An assemblage describes “the play of contingency and structure, organization and change.”²⁵ Intrinsic to the concept of assemblages, in this context, is the idea of scores being machinic. The scores in *The Fold* project are created by the multiplicity of interactions of each of the musicians’ Cantus Firmi at a molecular level. When the compositions are heard as a whole, the

²³ Claire Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* (New York: Routledge, 2002): 55.

²⁴ Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze*, 55–56.

²⁵ J. Macgregor Wise, “Assemblage,” in *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts* [2005], ed. Charles J. Stivale (Durham: Acumen, 2011): 91.

audience's perception is challenged; they hear a work that has no (single) subjective perspective. The origins of the music within this multiplicity become hallucinatory; the mechanism, or the machinic component (music) is here revealed on its own terms. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze uses music as an exemplary metaphor for the assemblage, describing the molecular elements as sonic blocks of becoming.²⁶ He divides music within this structure into two distinctive blocks of operation. The first is the content of the apparatus of music, the mechanism of cogs and levers made up of pitch, rhythm and harmony; in the context of *The Fold* project, the *Cantus Firmi* composed by each musician and the scores produced collectively from this material. This machinic block is what Deleuze describes as the *refrain* (*ritournelle*).²⁷ "A musical 'nome' is a little tune, a melodic formula that seeks recognition and remains the bedrock or ground of polyphony (*cantus firmus*)" (*TP*, 344). The concept of the refrain encompasses the content of the music and also the connecting agents that bind this content together into an operative mechanism. Analogous to the refrain is the musical term *Punctus Contra Punctum*, or point on point, sounds relating to sounds, that make up the fundamentals of counterpoint. For Deleuze, "the refrain is properly musical content, the block of content proper to music" (*TP*, 330). The second block of the musical assemblage is concerned with the expressive elements of music, how it is perceived, how it *affects*. This block announces the refrain moving it outward into the

26 As opposed to defining "things" as "beings" with an ontology that refers to a stable origin, Deleuze in his concept of "becoming" purports that "all 'beings' are just relatively stable moments in a flow of becoming-life" (Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze*, 125). "Things" are therefore, transitory impressions open to infinite variations of meaning – particularly dependent on their context.

27 Deleuze describes three aspects or states that exist simultaneously within the refrain. For example: (I) "A child in the dark, gripped with fear, comforts himself by singing under his breath . . . The song is like a rough sketch of a calming and stabilizing, calm and stable, center in the heart of chaos." A refrain in this instance stabilizes a moment, creates a territory of stability within a personal inward chaos. (II) A refrain creates stability within an interpersonal space that encircles, for example within the home: "A housewife sings to herself, or listens to the radio, as she marshals the antichaos forces of her work. Radios and television sets are like sound walls around every household and mark territories (the neighbor complains when it gets too loud)." (III) "Finally, one opens the circle a crack, opens it all the way, lets someone in, calls someone, or else goes out oneself, launches forth. One opens the circle not on the side where the old forces of chaos press against it but in another region, one created by the circle itself." The refrain in this instance, simultaneously enables an outward movement, "hazarding an improvisation," from the stability of the sheltered personal, and interpersonal space of the first two "states" (*TP*, 343).

world. It is a “block of expression [. . .], a creative, active operation that consists in deterritorializing the refrain (*TP*, 331). The internal structure of music is deterritorialized through the affect that the internal musical combinations of elements create – incorporeal transformations – re-contextualizing music depending on diverse situations – in other words, how music is perceived as in sensorial terms. “Music exists because the refrain exists also, because music takes up the refrain, lays hold of it as a content in a form of expression, because it forms a block with it in order to take it somewhere else” (*TP*, 331).

The Cantus Firmi composed by the musicians in *The Fold* act as blocks of content proper to music – pitches, rhythms and harmonies. During the first and second stages of the process, the primary activity is to construct a scaffold and build frameworks. As the building of the work progresses, these Cantus Firmi or refrains are arranged – reterritorialized – into operative scores. Musicians maneuver within this machinic apparatus deterritorializing the notation annunciating it through the performative interpretation of the content. The notes begin as written, static, silent representatives of music in graphic form. As the players transform this information into sonic events through their instruments, they create perspectives on the arrangement of sounds (no longer just written objects), marking territories, expressivities, opening spaces for transformations within this distinctly pre-classical, stereotypical Baroque assemblage.

Like other collaborative musical projects, *The Fold* deterritorializes the refrain, as the musicians reinterpret the fixed musical materials. The refrains become sites of exploration. However, they are also signifiers, personal statements within collective authorship. Conversations amongst the musicians after performances suggested a different quality of musical experience compared to situations where they were merely realizing a regulative score or performing completely improvised music. This particular *interactional synchrony*²⁸ in the process of *The Fold* is achieved through the unique differential relationships between the musicians created by the interweaving of the machinic elements – their personal refrains – into the structure of the scores. The musicians had a heightened sense of involvement as the personal refrains enabled a unique synchrony creating “a plateau that is reached when circumstances combine to bring an activity to a pitch of intensity.”²⁹

²⁸ R. Keith Sawyer, *Group Creativity: Music, Theater, Collaboration* (London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 2003).

²⁹ Brian Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari* (Cambridge MA and London: MIT P, 1992): 7.

Deterritorialization and reterritorialization

The refrains territorialized and created spheres of expression. “The territory, and the functions performed within it, are products of territorialization”; when the territorialization of the refrain occurs, “a possession is declared, and a dimensional space is established” (*TP*, 348). The musician territorializes and therefore possesses pitch “A” in combination with pitch “B,” that is, in the decision-making process of composition. The territory, which has dimensions or boundaries, becomes what Deleuze and Guattari have termed “property.” For Deleuze and Guattari, “property is fundamentally artistic because art is fundamentally poster, placard” (*TP*, 348). Territorialization is an act; an action that creates a metaphorical “poster” through which it advertises (creates) the boundaries of the territory in which it is placed. Importantly, a territory is both expressive and functional. A bird territorializes the boundaries of its nesting and feeding area through bird song. These boundaries cannot be seen; they are heard. The song can be perceived as an aesthetic object, but, for the bird and its genus, it has a clear function. It demarcates their literal, physical territory. Territorialization creates “posters” in the sense that the musicians territorialize the written notes in terms of their individual composition and arrangement of the notes and subsequent interpretation in performance. By fixing their musical ideas in response to the *Present, Above, Below, Past and Future* aspects, the musicians create territories and posters sending their subjective perspectives into the world. Making something relies on being decisive, using known elements, on acting upon these known elements and rearranging them differently. Composing is the poster, the placard, the announcement that a possession has taken place, that at this point a property has been personalized and *subjectified*. In this moment, the idea of territorialization or something that is fundamentally artistic occurs. The written ideas become what may be termed objectified subjectivity (a fixed object as opposed to creating music purely by improvising) where transitory and elusive territories are created and absorbed more readily into the *chaosmos*. Territories and territorialization pertain to the refrain; their interaction forms the nucleus of the machinic assemblage with the two aspects acting as the synthesizing components of music; the block of content and territories on one hand, and the block of expression, the poster or placard announcing and affecting aspects of music, on the other. “Music is precisely the adventure of the refrain” (*TP*, 333); it is in its nature to journey outward to find new contexts of expression. *The Fold* is a mapping of a particular example of this journeying outwards – of taking the refrains of the Cantus Firmi composed by each member of the group out of their original context, arranging them into written scores, performing and improvising. *The Fold* deterritorializes and reterritorializes the refrain composed by each member of the ensemble. To deterritorialize, in a

musical sense, is for the work or section of the work to shift out of its original context without changing the content. Music that is being listened to by a soldier preparing for battle on an iPod can also be experienced in the exact same form by an office worker going to work on the morning commute. Deterritorialization is concerned with the changing *effect* of music and with the transference of what is expressive in music without altering the internal structures.

Reterritorialization, in the musical sense, is the transference of music from one context to another while also changing the content proper such as pitch, tempo, musical rhythm or intention. For example, within the context of *The Fold* project, arranging a melody intended to be performed on a melodic instrument, to a non-pitched instrument like a drum. The melody or pitch material can no longer be heard whilst the rhythmic structure is isolated and still intact. This type of transference is seen as a more absolute form of deterritorialization where the re-contextualized melody cannot be obviously linked back to the original source. Reterritorialization repositions music on a content level. The structure is altered in such a way as to create an entirely new set of materials. Deterritorialization is transitory. It is concerned with the transference of the *effects* of music within the annunciating assemblage. Deterritorialization can move back and forth between contexts. For example, the same piece of music can be experienced live, performed by an orchestra, or heard in an elevator. By contrast, reterritorialization destabilizes the refrain within the machinic assemblage more fundamentally. Once the music has been changed and reterritorialized to a new context, it builds new structures that have an *organizational permanency* and are less able to move back and forth between assemblages. The refrains gathered from the musicians in *The Fold* go through both processes. In most circumstances the melodies are deterritorialized in that they are used in their original form but have been re-contextualized and placed side by side with the other melodies. It would be a difficult proposition for the listener to discern the original melody composer within the ensemble. The overall effect is a multi-layering of ideas that push and pull against each other – a process of five individual voices coexisting together in a musical concertation working toward transitory accords in a luxurious counterpoint.

A new harmony

As a practical methodology for collectively composing music *The Fold* is an application of Deleuze's final chapter of *The Fold, Leibniz and the Baroque* entitled "The New Harmony." The counterpoint is created between the allegory of the

text, between the relationships of the musicians, and the method of music making and the relationships between sound on sound with each of these aspects that provide points and counterpoints of accord and dis-chord (Punctus Contra Punctum – point on point). As already mentioned, *The Fold* does not begin with a pre-established form, harmony, or a set of aesthetics. For Deleuze, “Baroque music is what can *extract harmony from melody*” (FLB, 128). Likewise, *The Fold* project is the process of manifesting accords through extracting a new harmony from combining the different melodies (personalities) of each of the performers together.

Malebranche’s occasionalism remains precisely a philosophical polyphony, in which occasion plays the role of counterpoint, in a perpetual miracle or a constant intervention of God. In the new system, on the contrary, melody, freed of [this] modal counterpoint, gains a force of variation that consists in introducing all kinds of foreign elements in the realization of the accord (delays, inter- weavings, appoggiaturas, etc., whence ensure a new tonal or “luxuriant” counterpoint), but also a force of continuity that will develop a unique motif, even across eventual tonal diversities (“continuo homophone”). (FLB, 135)

This new system or harmony transforms the monad, or at least severs the absolutism of the monad from Leibniz and Malebranche’s perspective of worlds (monads) that are selected by God above all other worlds. Private and individual monads become open to the perspectives of all other monads and allow all kinds of foreign elements in the realization of the accord from within and without the monad’s structure. In terms of the monad as musical score, the score, in this new harmony, is no longer a self-referencing regulative functioning entity composed by an individual, but a site of praxis inviting collaboration from different perspectives enabling a new luxuriant counterpoint. By allowing these different perspectives to intervene in the collaborative process of *The Fold*, it enables a force of continuity that develops a unique motif, even across eventual tonal diversities – or, for Deleuze, “continuo homophone.” This neologism, *continuo homophone*, refers to the process of inventing ideas through constant movement. Continuo homophone is a play on the meaning of the concept of *basso continuo* in Baroque music. The basso continuo (or “continuo” for short) was, as the name suggests, a continuous bass accompaniment, customarily played by a keyboard instrument (left hand) and a bass instrument that would follow a partially written out score – normally only the bass notes were placed in the music and the keyboardist would improvise the rest (with their right hand) following specific numbers written in the score (figured bass) that expressed the harmonic structure and interplay between voices and the continuo. The movement evolves through trial and error; it is a groping experimentation:

In its turn harmony goes through a crisis that leads to a broadened chromatic scale, to an emancipation of dissonance or of unresolved accords, accords not brought back to a tonality. The musical model is most apt to make clear the rise of harmony in the Baroque, and then the dissipation of tonality in the neo-Baroque: from harmonic closure to an opening onto a polytonality or, as Boulez will say, a “polyphony of polyphonies.”

(FLB, 82)

From monadology to nomadology

In a geophilosophical sense, *The Fold* project invites discussion through dissonance. In the *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* and in his subsequent book, *What is Philosophy?* (co-authored with Felix Guattari), Deleuze advocates a philosophical move toward what Tom Conley has called

the collapse of national boundaries or a return to diversities of economic or ethnic worlds that the totalitarian aspect of liberal democracy has atomized, at least in one stage, by the labor of conceptual thinking [. . .]. Entailed is a revolution of “absolute deterritorialization.”³⁰

With the emancipation of musical a priori to embrace the possibilities of atonalism (tonality being one of the most important regulative functions of the score), *The Fold* project is a simulacrum of this geophilosophy, a collaborative process that crosses borders of culture and musical siloism. As universal a language as music is perceived to be, professional musicians specialize very early on in their development. They maintain the focus on one particular tradition for their entire lives as the historical breadth, depth and complexity of repertoire is too demanding to master in each tradition alone. Very few musicians have successful careers in more than one genre or musical style. This tendency creates fixed borders between genres, pedagogies, musicians and audiences. For example, in the Cologne iteration of *The Fold*, musicians were selected from the contemporary classical, jazz/improvised music and Iranian traditions. In Europe, where this musical siloism is arguably at its extreme, and in the current climate of immigration (in particular, the increase in the Muslim population in Cologne), musicians trained in western music collectively composing with musicians from other cultures is significant in terms of the implications it has for the cultural divides between the so-called established paradigms and minority groups. As a project, *The Fold* is an atomized version of society, emphasizing both the labor of composition and a particular

³⁰ Tom Conley, “Translator’s Foreword: A Plea for Leibniz,” in *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* [1988], trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: UMP, 2007): xiv–xv.

community of practice.³¹ It is site-specific, reliant on local musicians from diverse cultural and stylistic backgrounds that come together at a specified time; it permits tradition- and practice-based melding both verbally and musically.

For the race summoned forth by art or philosophy is not the one that claims to be pure but rather an oppressed, bastard, lower, anarchical, nomadic, and irremediably minor race – the very ones that Kant excluded from the paths of the new Critique.³²

This collision of personalities and cultures in a polyphony of polyphonies is both quintessentially Baroque and contemporaneous since the Baroque folds consists of “all kinds of folds coming from the East, Greek, Roman, Romanesque, Gothic, Classical folds” (*FLB*, 3). In this sense, *The Fold* project is fundamentally an iterative nomadic process where musicians interact, develop and collectively progress musical ideas from individual perspectives.

The concepts [refrains] it [“Nomad thought”] creates do not merely reflect the eternal form of a legislating subject [regulative score], but are defined by a communicable force in relation to which their subject, to the extent that they can be said to have one, is only secondary. Rather than reflecting the world, they are immersed in a changing state of things [...] [synthesizing] a multiplicity of elements without effacing their heterogeneity or hindering their potential for future rearranging.³³

In *The Fold*, power structures, inherited from the state-sanctioned tonal structures implemented during the first Viennese School (Hayden, Mozart, Beethoven) that dictated the apparatus of musical forces in Classical forms, or the regulative score structures imposed by extremely constricting contractual obligations, are deterritorialized and reimagined in nomadic fashion.

A nomadic Caesar who doesn’t cross the Rubicon or a vagabond Adam who resists temptation. A nomadology replaces a monadology when individuation becomes unlimited and decentred and when bifurcation and divergences of series cease to be genuine borders between impossible worlds but form “intraworldly connections.”³⁴

31 “In fact, Deleuze and Guattari would probably be more inclined to call philosophy music with content than music a rarefied form of philosophy.” Massumi, *A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 6.

32 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* [1991], trans. Hugh Tomlinson, Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia UP, 1996): 109.

33 Massumi, *A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 5–6.

34 Sjoerd van Tuinen, “A Transcendental Philosophy of the Event: Deleuze’s Non-Phenomenological Reading of Leibniz,” in *Deleuze and The Fold: A Critical Reader*, ed. Sjoerd van Tuinen, Niamh McDonnell (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010): 173.

From the psychic geometry delineating personal refrains to public performance; from refrains opening outward from a regulative function to operatively enabling collective synchronicities and collective plateaus of intensity, the monad of the score and of the musician shifting from a private personal space within the upper floor of the Baroque house, through the openings on the first floor out into the world; the distinctions between public and private are dissolved. They have “come to identify variation and trajectory, and overtake monadology with a ‘nomadology’” (*FLB*, 137). Through the process of collectively devising music in the above-described project, *The Fold* not only unfurls all the way to infinity but also all the way to the present, in a continuous unfolding, “discovering new ways of folding, akin to new envelopments [...] folding, unfolding, refolding” (*FLB*, 137).