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Towards a Meta-Baroque: Imagining a “Fantastic Reality”

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Abstract

In her book, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*, Elizabeth Grosz (2001: 6) argues for the possibility of philosophy constituting a means, or a vehicle, for the "construction" of architecture: "[t]he notion of philosophy as a making, building, production, or construction, a practical construction, is a really interesting idea, one worth developing in the future."

Whilst this is not a philosophical text, it is, nonetheless a text that seeks to understand a philosophical thought process on the basis of particular ideas taken from the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, such as the *montage* of the Baroque House, as an allegory, which the French philosopher developed from the principles of the German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz in *Le Pli: Leibniz et le Baroque (The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque)*. In addition to seeking to understand a thought process, this paper also seeks place the Baroque – as an imagined Baroque, a meta-Baroque – in a discussion of contemporaneity, seen through the prism of the inter-relations between the “obscure” worlds of artists Francis Bacon and Louise Bourgeois, and Bernini’s *bel composto*, and through the gaze of the allegoric Baroque model proposed by Deleuze.

Keywords: Gilles Deleuze; Francis Bacon; Louise Bourgeois; Bernini’s *bel composto*; Meta-Baroque architecture

1. The imagined house that Deleuze designed: an allegory

Walter Benjamin made a decisive step forward in our understanding of the Baroque when he showed that allegory was not a failed symbol, or an abstract personification, but a power of figuration entirely different from that of the symbol: the latter combines the eternal and the momentary, nearly at the centre of the world, but allegory uncovers nature and history according to the order of time. (Deleuze, 2006, p. 143)

In his book *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*

(1988), the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) develops a discourse based on a reading of the work of the German philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) and proposes, as early as the third page of the text, a design. With his drawing, Deleuze appears to want to assert the power of figuration, assuming the drawing as a representation of an allegory. An allegory of the Baroque House. That house is not a direct representation of a Baroque architectural representation; it is a model – or a diagram – that helps to provide information on a conceptual universe. In this Deleuzian reading of Leibniz¹:

¹ Gilles Deleuze argues that his text does not solely reflect Leibniz’s thought, but also sets out to

[t]he 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 infinity, fold over fold, one upon the other. The Baroque folds unfurls all the way to infinity. First, the Baroque differentiates its folds in two ways, by moving along to infinities, as if infinity were composed of two stages or floors: the pleats of matter, and the folds in the soul. (2006, p. 3)

In the original French publication of 1988, Deleuze's design or diagram is drawn in not-so-firm lines, the lines of someone seeking to confer upon it unexpected rigour. The finely drawn line, repeated several times, gives the drawing a certain degree of simplicity and humanity. The drawing is that of the Baroque allegorical house: a two-storey house in which the lower floor, directly open to the exterior, communicates with the second, which is almost entirely closed off to the exterior – a kind of "camera obscura". However, the drawing offers one singular feature. It shows the exterior and interior simultaneously: the exterior emerges as a façade on the lower level; the interior emerges in the transition from the lower floor to the upper floor, lingering on the latter. On the façade there is a door – of a good size – to which lead three steps drawn almost as semicircles, with the final step the exact same width as the door itself. On each side of the door, two rectangular window openings are placed in a horizontal position. In terms of their uppermost line, they reach slightly above the upper level of the door. They are window openings placed above the line of sight – one cannot see inside this Baroque house, just as one cannot see the exterior from inside; but there is light that illuminates the space on the lower floor – that is what the drawing tells us. From these four window openings four arrows point to the upper floor – the connection between the floors is represented by means of an interrupted line. It is in this connection created by the

hypothetical entrance of light that reflects on the upper floor that one finds the transition from a world represented on the exterior to a world represented on the interior. One should point out that the drawing, in general terms, consists of a horizontal rectangle, for the lower level, and a smaller vertical rectangle, for the upper floor, that is closed at the top by two diagonal lines representing the two sides of a roof. From the ceiling inside, five lines – they could be ropes, elastics or textile elements – are represented as if in motion, as errant lines that twist their way down from the upper part of the second floor beyond the line dividing the two levels – the already mentioned interrupted line that separates the two floors and the two realities, the exterior and the interior. This upper level does not appear to have any source of daylight – at least not as clear a source as the four windows shown on the lower floor from the exterior, on the façade. But the four arrows pointing upwards diagonally cross the interrupted line that separates the floors, suggesting communication with the ropes or textile elements that are found hanging on the second floor. They do not meet, but a certain tension can be felt. The intertwining vertical lines seem to come to life, like tentacles, in the presence of the arrows. What converges upwards? Light? Atmosphere? Small hand-written notes to the left of each rectangle provide some clues. Next to the lower rectangle is written: "Pièces communes avec 'quelques petites ouvertures': les cinq sens" (Deleuze, 1988, p. 7) or "Common rooms, with 'several small openings:' the five senses (2006, p. 5). Next to the upper rectangle one reads: "Pièce close privée, tapissée d'une 'toile diversifiée par les plis'" (Deleuze, 1988, p. 7) or "Closed private room, decorated with a 'drapery diversified by folds'" (2006, p. 5). We now understand that the lower floor is in contact with the world – bear in mind that it is represented through its façade – and that the five openings, if one includes the door, facilitate activation of the five senses which, when activated, convey "information" to the upper

achieve, to the maximum degree possible, a reconciliation of the Leibniz philosophy with that of

the English philosopher John Locke (1632-1704) (2006, p. 4).

floor, which seems to fold over the first; this fold – or interrupted line – lets through, from the closed private floor on top, a screen that is diversified by folds, a screen that may consist of cords or ropes or a heavy and opulent fabric that has the folds woven into it. The upper floor falls in on itself in heavy obscurity, seeking tactile communication with the lower floor by means of a system of tensions. In the translation from French to English of the legend added by Deleuze for the upper floor, the word "decorated" seems to be a little reductive for the majestic intensity of the folds produced by such draping. The drawing of this allegorical house is finished off with a small element on the exterior of the house on the left at the vertex where the lines of the two rectangles or floors meet. It is a short squiggling line that ends in two elements spiralling in opposing directions. Is it just a little added flourish? Is it a reference to a decorative coiled element indicative of the Baroque identity of the house? Or is it a hinge mediating between a drawing that represents concepts – if one refers immediately to philosophy, for it is not philosophy that, according to Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1930-1992), provides concepts – and a drawn diagram that represents concepts through precepts and feelings? (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p 7).

But what kind of house is this? It is an imagined house, formed by plastic forces, by pleats of matter. In this matter, there is an affinity with life. This is a house made up of organic matter. As Deleuze writes:

The lower level or floor is thus also composed of organic matter. An organism is defined by endogenous folds, while inorganic matter has exogenous folds that are always determined from without or by the surrounding environment. (2006, pp. 7-8)

The lower floor is thus filled with matter and organisms, matter and living beings. And the upper floor? With the soul – or the monad, to use Leibniz's term. But why is there a so apparent distinction between organic matter and soul in this model or this Baroque montage put together by Deleuze? The supposed division is an opening, between folds, that makes the case for the union of body and soul – bear in mind that

endogenous folds define an organism. Deleuze points out:

Life is not only everywhere, but souls are everywhere in matter. Thus, when an organism is called to unfold its own parts, its animal or sensitive soul is opened onto an entire theatre in which it perceives or feels according to its unity, independently of its organism, yet inseparable from it.

In the Baroque, the soul entertains a complex relation with the body. Forever indissociable from the body, it discovers a vertiginous animality that gets it tangled in the pleats of matter, but also an organic or cerebral humanity (the degree of development) that allows it to rise up, and that will make it ascend over all other folds. (2006, p. 12)

The complex relationship between soul and body is represented, in the drawing, by the interrupted line between the two floors, where there is an interval between folds, the folds that descend from the upper down to the lower floor; this opening is essentially a place of activation of the plastic forces that reside in the animal plastic material and/or, as Deleuze differentiates, in the organic humanity. The soul falls and becomes indiscernible from the matters and the organisms, while the matters and organisms emit vertical "impulses" or waves that reverberate in the folds of the upper floor. The upper floor – windowless but for some occasional and isolated bended small openings which provide light for the soul – is covered by a matter, a dark, dense curtain, diversified by folds, "as if it were living dermis" (Deleuze, 2006, p. 4). When called upon by the matter, the folds are activated, vibrate or oscillate from their lower extremities, like suspended ropes animated by ascending spasms. Of the two floors, Deleuze says the following:

Leibniz constructs a great Baroque montage that moves between the lower floor, pierced with windows, and the upper floor, blind and closed, but on the other hand resonating as if it were a musical salon translating the visible movements below into sounds up above. (2006, p. 4).

The house is a world in interiority, almost blind, but animated by reverberations of visible movements. It is as if it were a labyrinthine world, but one where the

labyrinth functions as an abyss where the Being falls in on itself, in successive layers of falls in the double sense of the word. The house is imagined, but it takes on an operative role: as a Baroque montage. That is the allegory.

2. Mouth: Entering into the Flesh

Let us return to Deleuze's diagram and the door in the centre of the lower horizontal rectangle. Although it is known that the Leibnizian monads have neither windows nor doors, nor any other type of opening, Deleuze points out the possibility of seeing it as a "camera obscura", where the light, which flows in through a single opening on the top, does not fall in the space in a direct way, creating, in a way, various types of *trompe l'oeil*. He thus goes on to propose the following possibility: "the monad has furniture and objects only in *trompe l'oeil*." (Deleuze, 2006, p. 31); and advances:

the architectural ideal is a room in black marble, in which light enters only through orifices so well bent that nothing on the outside can be seen through them, yet they illuminate or colour the décor of a pure inside.

However, there is the door on the lower floor – which is full of organic mass or matter – that opens freely. On the outside, it gives rise to, as if extending an invitation, the three steps that have been carefully drawn in the diagram. Like a mouth. A mouth that enters the flesh, progressively becoming an interior world.

Perhaps like a mouth painted by Francis Bacon (1909-1992) – gaping, entirely unapologetic in relation to its own almost animal-like nature. The red, shiny meat in the fold of the exterior to the interior. The mouth, particularly a mouth depicted in a silent cry, is an obsessive element in the painting of Bacon. In an interview, Bacon himself points out:

[a]nother thing that made me think about the human cry was a book that I bought when I was very young from a bookshop in Paris, a second-hand book which had a beautiful hand-coloured plates of diseases of the mouth, beautiful plates of the mouth open and of the examination of the inside of the mouth; and

they fascinated me, and I was obsessed by them. And then I saw – or perhaps I even knew by then – the Potemkin film, and I attempted to use the Potemkin still as a basis on which I could also use these marvelous illustrations of the human mouth. It never worked out, though. (Sylvester, 2012, p. 35)

The perfect mouth uttering a scream is that of one of the female characters that witness, in horror, the Odessa Steps scene in Sergei M. Eisenstein's (1898-1948) film, *Battleship Potemkin* (1925). The scream is silent, and it is perfect that way. The scream as a disease that infects the mouth as it is swallowed down within the being. The pain reverberates in the folds of the soul – from the meat to the abstract world of the monad. On Bacon, Deleuze writes:

[...], it is important to understand the affinity of the mouth, and the interior of the mouth, with meat, and to reach the point where the open mouth becomes nothing more than the section of a severed artery, [...]. The mouth then acquires this power of nonlocalization that turns all meat into a head without a face. It is no longer a particular organ, but the hole through which the entire body escapes, and from which the flesh descends [...]. This is what Bacon calls the Scream, in the immense pity that the meat evokes. (2003, p. 19)

The house needs this mouth as the opening to an obscure world, as a passage between plastic and elastic forces of matter. Opening in effort. Exterior that forces its way into the interior. No matter how much this allegory is fixated on the interiority fallen in on itself, the contagion – in the form of reverberation – is necessary. One can imagine, even – in a progression from a Deleuzian Baroque house to a new level – where the mouth is a mouth in movement, and due to so much movement, it loses its "place" in the Baroque symmetry proposed in Deleuze's drawing. A mouth that changes its configuration, its form, and its place, depending on the need to establish, as a whole in coalescence, different relationships between the exterior and the interior, causing the matter to reverberate and vibrate in different ways the folds that extend downwards. There are no more organs. There is a head without a face, an open and cavernous whole. One should not forget that in his drawing, Deleuze shows us

the exterior and interior at the same time. In order to advance – to take a step forward –, the exterior would have to be shaken by the movement, dismantling the symmetry and the precise location of the elements that make up its image. One would have to assume the architectural interiority as a thing, just as one can assume the flight of the body to the head as a "thing". We one would have to assume, as a pressing need in the architectural context, an operation of the imagination sublimated by an aesthetic intention. Accordingly, this Baroque architectural montage, now in a state of imbalance, that moves from the concepts to the precepts and feelings, is also an aesthetic operation. As Bacon points out in an interview:

I've always been very moved by the movements of the mouth and the shape of the mouth and the teeth. [...], and I've always hoped in a sense to be able to paint the mouth like Monet painted a sunset. (Sylvester, 2012, pp. 49-50)

3. Cells: Inside of a Montage

Bacon has said:

I've used the figures lying on beds with a hypodermic syringe as a form of nailing the image more strongly into reality or appearance. I don't put the syringe because of the drug that's being injected but because it's less stupid than putting a nail through the arm, which would be even more melodramatic. I put the syringe because I want a nailing of the flesh onto the bed. (Sylvester, 2012, p. 78)

This brings us back to the presence of flesh as matter, to which one can add the presence of the need for the passage from the virtual to the actual – that pair, virtual and actual, is Deleuzian in its essence. In his painting, Bacon had the need to "nail" this need for it to be more real, or perhaps to "appear" more real; and it is through the flesh, its thickness, that he nails it. Yes, this is melodramatic, but perhaps no more so than the image of the organic matter on the lower floor of the Baroque house being stimulated by and reacting to, or sensing, the upper floor. Whilst the monad is a being which, taken to the extreme, could exist without a body -

remaining in the obscurity, illuminating itself, in small isolated areas – Leibniz, through Deleuze, argues for the need for a body. Precisely because there is a small area that is illuminated, and that requires a body. The pain that emanates through the body, by means of the nailed flesh, which in Bacon's painting is virtual, is in truth actualised in the folds of the monad, turning it into a being. Is that not the function of art? To go from the virtual to the actual.

But this need to have a body can also be interpreted in a different way: one can imagine the representation of a body, which is virtual, even though it is actual, and expose it to a montage process. The allegorical house is body and soul of itself and to itself, the already mentioned Deleuzian montage. But the Baroque – not the Baroque of the philosophy and mathematics of Leibniz – offers us a complex process of montage that also results in a whole; here, one can think of, for example, the *bel composto* of Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680). Giovanni Careri writes the following:

Bernini was not referring to architecture alone, but rather to the relationship between arts. We ought to think, therefore, in terms of a dynamic process in which the rules of each arts are pushed to their limits in order to achieve an extension onto which the rules of another art will be crafted. (2003, p. 33)

Further according to Careri (1995, p. 1), the interior of Bernini's chapels is the most complete realisation of the *bel composto*. In these chapels – such as the Cornaro chapel in Santa Maria della Vittoria (1647-52), the Fonseca chapel in San Lorenzo in Lucina (1664-75), and the Albertoni chapel in San Francesco a Ripa (1665-75) – the interiors function as complete autonomous organisms in and of themselves:

a dark world sealed below by the balustrade and lit from above by the light of a lantern. Covered by a luminous celestial dome, this dark, earthly place is populated by bodies made of paint, marble, stucco, and flesh. (Careri, 1995, p. 1)

These bodies are organised in their matter, and in their "human organic" being – in a dark and closed world close to the idea of the monad, in a proliferation of other matters and

other figures, in an arrangement that recalls, according to Careri (1995, p. 2), a type of montage – matters and figures that move from one component of the composition to the other. It is the spectator who assembles this into a whole. However, Deleuze takes this idea further, albeit without referring directly to the *bel composto* or Careri's notion of the montage; he proposes an overpowering reading of the Baroque as a whole:

[i]f the Baroque establishes a total art or a unity of the arts, it does so first of all in extension, each art tending to be prolonged and even to be prolonged into the next art, which exceeds the one before. We have remarked that the Baroque often confines painting to retables, but it does so because the painting exceeds its frame and is realized in polychrome marble sculpture; and sculpture goes beyond itself by being architecture; and in turn, architecture discovers a frame in the façade, but the frame itself becomes detached from the inside and establishes relations with the surroundings so as to realize architecture in city planning. From one end of the chain to the other, the painter has become all urban designer. We witness the prodigious development of a continuity in the arts, in breadth or in extension: an interlocking of frames of which each is exceeded by a matter that moves through it. (2006, p. 141)

It is in this chain reaction in continuity, in constant extension – as if the folds of the Baroque clothes progress in continuity and swallow and extend, also in continuity, the arts, taking them, as one, from passage to passage in the successive curves of the fold – that the bodies that people these chapels are realised in architecture, because they exceed the painting, to go beyond sculpture, to become architecture. Careri (1995, p. 3) attributes the term “emotional machines” to the prime nature of these chapels, but advances that in these machines, the spectator participates in the composition by gathering their heterogeneous elements together to make them a whole. In a way, this passage from the emotional machine to the determination of the coalescence of the elements, as a whole, through the filter – which is the agent-body, the body that feels but also gathers together – calls to mind the term *machinic*, a Deleuzian term associated with that which is machined, which is used by

the French philosopher when he refers to the plastic forces impacting on the matter on the lower floor of the Baroque house. Deleuze writes:

[i]f plastic forces can be distinguished, it is not because living matter exceeds mechanical processes, but because mechanisms are not sufficient to be machines. A mechanism is faulty not for being too artificial to account for leaving matter, but for not being mechanical enough, for not being adequately machined. Our mechanisms are in fact organized into parts that are not in themselves machines, while the organism is infinitely machined, a machine whose every part or piece is a machine, but only “transformed by different folds that it receives.” (2006, p. 8)

This idea of a *machinic* whole leads us back to Eisenstein. In his *Cinéma 1: L'image-mouvement* (1983), Deleuze (2013, p. 30) argues, in a section about Eisenstein, that montage is the Whole of a film. For Careri, reference to the montage associated with the *composto*, takes in Soviet cinema and the composition as a whole, regardless of the heterogeneity of the components:

[I]ike Bernini, Eisenstein works with leaps from one level to another and with conversations back and forth among disparate components, gauging the pathetic and cognitive effects he will obtain. Like Eisenstein, Bernini understands that linking together of several arts in a *composto* is successful only when uniqueness of each one has been preserved in the montage and only when the shift from one to another has been calculated according to the cognitive and pathetic effects that the artist wishes to create in the spectator. (Careri, 1995, p. 5)

Mieke Bal (2001, p. 98) argues that Careri uses this model – the montage model proposed by Eisenstein – to explain various aspects she refers to as integration. Montage, more than a model that unifies, is

a dynamic model, a theory of reception. Cognitively, montage integrates iconography with the sensorial, thus producing pathos. And, most important, he insists, the ‘non-indifference of materials’ makes for embodied form.

Although he used one single frame from *Battleship Potemkin* as a reference for his mouths producing a silent cry, Bacon was probably conscious of the whole enormous

montage process that resulted in the Odessa Steps sequence – the modelling of time and space. This reminds one of the mouths of Bacon's figures, that disintegrate in their respective faces, which themselves become dissolved in a process of "acceleration and alteration" of time, like a tremor, like an extraordinary agitation. This agitation is the result of different forces (it does not result from movement of the head). Forces of pressure, expansion, contraction, flattening, stretching. Forces that are exerted on a motionless head. Forces, as we understand, of time and in time.

The Franco-American artist Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010) – a self-professed admirer of Bacon² – says of her work in an interview:

[i]n general, my work portrays and encompasses the whole tradition of art. It is baroque, for example. I have even called one work *Baroque*, a work made about 1970." (Kuspit, 1998, p. 162)

It is precisely through Bourgeois's relationship with Baroque sculpture, specifically with Bernini – and in particular through her work *Homage to Bernini* (1967), that it offers what Bal (2001, p. 48) refers to as a "radically innovative exploration of sculpture narrativity – in dialogue with both modernism and baroque." For Bal, the form this exploration takes is architectural. In a way, Bourgeois informs the architectural aspect of her work with her own body. Whereby she herself, her body, is memory. In the work of Bourgeois, from the *femme-maison* – half woman, half house – to the Cells meticulously constructed as objects of interiority, and to representations in diverse media of the houses of her life, architecture has played a very present, representative role.

But Bourgeois's Cells do not reject an almost animal-like aspect that is given to them. In *Spider*, as the title indicates, a huge spider envelops one such Cell – as if the cell were the result of its own self, the housing for its eggs,

its young. In the centre of the Cell a chair awaits an absent body, whilst on the metal grid that forms the cell's outer limits hang pieces of bone. In this sense, this is an approximation to the visceral work of Bacon. On pain, Bourgeois writes: "[e]ach *Cell* deals with fear. Fear is pain. Often it is not perceived as pain, because it is always disguising itself." (1998a, p. 205). In this sense also, as part animal – let us not forget pain – the Cells are constructions in interiority. Body-houses, but body-houses that are inside out – almost like a drawing of the cells "lodged" in our brain of the Spanish neuro-anatomist Santiago Ramón y Cajal (1852-1934). For Bal (2001, p. 48), Bourgeois's Cells function like a Baroque chapel, where the body is in the interior and exterior at the same time. This brings us back to the Deleuzian house and the interiority which is in some way inherent to the exteriority of the body as a whole. And to Bernini's chapels, where the sculpture-bodies and the non-indifference of materials give the chapels an embodied form, organising themselves in a world of closure and obscurity, as mentioned above, that is close to the idea of the monad. One finds in the work of Bourgeois, particularly in the Cells, the cross between the Deleuzian allegory and the *composto* of Bernini:

[e]ach *Cell* deals with the pleasure of the voyeur, the thrill of looking and being looked at. The *Cells* either attract or repulse each other. There is this urge to integrate, merge, or disintegrate. (Bourgeois, 1998a, p. 205)

But it is in the figure of the *femme-maison* that one finds a motive a profound motive for the montage of a new understanding of an imagined Baroque – one that goes from the virtual to the actual, then returns to the virtual, without ever forfeiting a dimension of reality. This montage is carried out primarily in coalescence, because she, Louise Bourgeois, is her work and her work is she herself, her house. Louise Bourgeois is the *femme-maison*. She is a Whole and the Whole

² "The intensity of Francis Bacon's works moves me deeply. I react positively. I sympathize. His suffering communicates. The definition of beauty is a kind of intimacy in the visual. I feel for Bacon even though his emotions are not mine. The physical reality of

his works is transformed and transcended. His room does not obey the laws of perspective. To look at his pictures makes me alive. I want to share it. It's almost the expression of love..." (Bourgeois, 1998, 229).

is she herself.

4. Meta-Baroque: Imagining a “Fantastic Reality”

Bourgeois's work *Hommage to Bernini* is a small bronze sculpture that is quite irregular in appearance; at its middle, its core is an orifice. In this void there emerge small “fingers” or perhaps small “phalli” that are only perceptible thanks to lighting. A cavernous body in metamorphosis? A grotesquely deformed head and its soul – close to a face such as those portrayed by Bacon? Could the void be an allusion to Bernini's chapels – like a house or like a *machinic* thing where the void reinforces the idea of the *bel composto*? Are the “fingers” bodies within bodies? From the sculpture to architecture, as Deleuze argues.

But later, in 1982, with her sculpture *Femme Maison*, Bourgeois (re)turns Bernini to the future. As Bal points out:

she inhabits his work in the mode of parasite. Over time, inhabiting inevitably builds a new logic, invents a host that did not exist before the parasite came to live in and on him. (2001, p. 101).

The sculpture features a head that has become a high-rise building, extending from a voluminous and dramatic body of marble consisting of successive twisted and re-twisted folds – not regular folds like Bernini's. Folds in convulsion and confusion, where the interval – like the interrupted line between the two floors of the house drawn by Deleuze – appears less subtle. In the centre of this body is a void like a mouth; however, it is a mouth that is not uttering a cry.

On Bernini's folds Deleuze writes:

[...] when the folds of clothing spill out of painting, it is Bernini who endows them with sublime form in sculpture, when marble seizes and bears to infinity folds that cannot be explained by the body, but by a spiritual adventure that can set the body ablaze. His is not an art of structures but of textures, as seen in the twenty marble forms he fashions. [...] is it not the fire that can alone account for the

extraordinary folds of the tunic of Bernini's Saint Theresa? Another order of the fold surges over the Blessed Ludovica Albertoni, this time turning back to a deeply furrowed earth. (2006, pp. 139-140)



Fig. 1: Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Blessed Ludovica Albertoni*, 1671-74; Church of San Francesco a Ripa. Photo: Maria João Soares.

What happens when the parasite settles in the folds described by Deleuze? When the parasite enters the clothing of Bernini's “chapel-women”³? It turns the *femme-maison* into an inverted model of the Baroque allegorical house. The folds are now at the bottom of the “house” and extend upwards in continuity, at the same time as “nailing” themselves – like flesh or like the monad, that is the question – to the centre of gravity. What is extended is the head, but one cannot know if the head, the building, is the body or if it is, in reality, the head. Body and head are indiscernible from each other as if they are a whole, and the parts are machines in constant operation, revealing the *machinic*. *Femme-maison* is, here, a time-fold in convulsion. From the virtual to the actual; and from the actual to the virtual.

³ An expression coined by Mieke Bal (2001).



Fig. 2: Louise Bourgeois, *Femme Maison*, 1982; marble; 63.5 x 49.5 x 58.4 cm. Photo: Allan Finkelman. © Louise Bourgeois Trust/VAGA, New York

Towards the end of *The Fold*, Deleuze writes:

[s]omething has changed in the situation of monads, between the former model, the closed chapel with imperceptible openings, and the new model invoked by [sculptor] Tony Smith, the sealed car speeding down the dark highway. (2006, p 157)

In this new model, the monads do not content themselves with staticity – they move rapidly through the darkness, headlights on in the darkest of darks. We not only fall into the abysses of the soul; we fall vertically and horizontally into and outside of Being. A breach has opened, and the mobile is exceeded. The new model exceeds the Einsteinian mechanical montage to become machinic in essence, where everything is a Whole – like Louise Bourgeois and her house, like Louise Bourgeois and her work. We are in coalescence. And looking for a meta-Baroque. “Fantastic-reality.”⁴

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⁴ An expression used by Rosalind E. Krauss (1999) to describe the relationship she established between

Louise Bourgeois’s work and the desiring-machine of Deleuze and Guattari.