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ARTIGO

Structure in Merleau-Ponty and the conciliation between unity and difference

A Estrutura em Merleau-Ponty e a conciliação entre unidade e diferença

Alex Moura

Abstract

In this article, we intend to work on the hypothesis that the notion of structure, proposed by Merleau-Ponty, allows us to conceive of an intrinsic articulation between the ideas of development and person – in more general terms, between unity and difference. In this sense, it allows us to make explicit a common dimension between the unity implied in the configuration of personality and the change implied in the configuration of development. Furthermore, as we will see, it highlights the primary reversibility that makes both reciprocally constitutive.

Keywords: Structure; Unity; Difference; Person; Development.

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Resumo

Nesse artigo, pretendemos trabalhar a hipótese de que a noção de estrutura, proposta por Merleau-Ponty, permite conceber uma articulação intrínseca entre as ideias de desenvolvimento e de pessoa – em termos mais gerais, entre unidade e diferença. Nesse sentido, ela permite explicitar uma dimensão comum entre a unidade implicada na configuração da pessoalidade e a mudança implicada na configuração do desenvolvimento. Mais ainda, como veremos, ela evidencia a reversibilidade primária que torna ambas reciprocamente constitutivas.

Palavras-chave: Estrutura; Unidade; Diferença; Pessoa; Desenvolvimento.

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Introduction

The proposal of the present Meeting to work on the theme of development and the notion of person within the field of phenomenology, especially at its interfaces with psychiatry, places us before a question, a foundational inquiry on which we would like to dwell in this presentation. How can we think the possibility of development without thereby renouncing a certain unitary or even permanent character of behavior? That is, how can we conceive a dimension of change without excluding certain parameters that give contour and constancy to what we might understand as "person," without which the very idea of development would become problematic? In short, how can we reconcile unity and transformation, permanence and development?

As a proposal for addressing this question, we will turn here to the work of the philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty and, in particular, to his notion of structure. The choice is justified insofar as we recognize in it a philosophical understanding capable of supporting, conceptually and methodologically, the possibility of conciliation between these two apparently alternative elements. The hypothesis, then, is that the notion of structure makes it possible to conceive an intrinsic articulation between the ideas of development and person – in more properly Merleau-Ponty's terms, between unity and difference. From this perspective, it enables us to make explicit a common dimension between the unity implied in the configuration of personality and the change implied in the configuration of development. Furthermore, as we shall see, it brings to light the primary reversibility that makes both reciprocally constitutive.

The concept of structure unfolds broadly across Merleau-Ponty's work. Present since his first book, published in 1938, the theme traverses his reflection, establishing one of its central and most fruitful axes[1]. As we will argue here, a fundamental aspect of this notion is the manner in which it incorporates and reworks a classic problem in philosophy: the relation between multiplicity and unity, between the particular and the whole, a metaphysical discussion par excellence. With it, as we shall see, the concept also takes up another central discussion, one particularly important for phenomenological thought: the

[1] This understanding will remain, here, as the backdrop to our discussions: that of the centrality of the concept of structure, placed in a nuclear position within the philosopher's work, alongside, for example, the concepts of perception and body. In this sense, it is an operator that not only establishes a constant direction (permanently reworked, yet cohesive) but also confers unity upon some of the main discussions undertaken by the author.

relation between change and permanence.

It is this dimension of the notion of structure, complex and multifaceted in itself, that will concern us here, in order to understand the way in which it offers Merleau-Ponty an alternative to modern dichotomies and, notably, to the antinomy between the one and the multiple, between permanence and difference, proposing a new paradigm of understanding[2].

Here, we will concentrate our discussion especially on his first book, *The Structure of Behavior*. Some of the themes most developed there concern the debate between philosophy and science (psychiatry included), the formulation of a singular understanding of pathology and, as the very title indicates, the understanding of behavior, bringing out the meaning and centrality that the concept of structure must assume. Already in the first lines of the brief Introduction to the book, we find a clear and precise project—indeed, one that will orient the author's entire oeuvre: "Our aim is to understand the relations of consciousness and nature—organic, psychological, and even social" (MERLEAU-PONTY, Maurice. 1967, p. 1).

The primary and principal question that sustains the investigation into the structure of behavior is to understand the relations between consciousness and nature, or between subject and object as it will later be described in his work. It is one of the core questions of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy — as, for example, the *Preface* to *Phenomenology of Perception* and a large part of his texts affirm: the proposal of a new understanding of the relations between subject and object, understood as central categories of modern thought.

Returning to the Introduction, the author then succinctly sketches the positions in which the thought of his time situated the understanding of nature and consciousness, as well as the possible relation between them. As regards physical nature, intellectualist theories transform it into the correlate of consciousness; there is nothing in it that is "strange" or proper. The world becomes the set of objective relations sustained by consciousness. Understood in this way, the notion of Nature is then "idealized," attenuated, and reduced to the sphere of thought. As for psychology, it opts to bind itself to realism and

[2] Thus, in bringing the theme of structure to the fore—as it seems to us—together with other themes correlative to it, such as the notions of institution and Nature, Merleau-Ponty takes up a classic question, now incorporated into the project of a phenomenology of perception, to which, in the author's terms, it would fall to rediscover the nuclear contradiction of phenomenology, uniting essence and existence, gathering "the extreme subjectivism and the extreme objectivism in its notion of world and truth" (as stated in the Preface to *Phenomenology of Perception*).

causal thinking in an attempt to establish itself as a "natural science," and thus remains faithful to the tendency to objectify—or even to naturalize—the notions of consciousness and spirit. In a curious way, we have a mutual inversion and the consequent dilution of the haecceity of the terms. Psychology objectifies the notion of Spirit, while Physics spiritualizes the notion of Nature. This, according to the philosopher, is the scene of French intellectual thought at that moment:

> Thus, among contemporaries in France, we find juxtaposed a philosophy that makes all nature an objective unity before consciousness, and sciences that treat the organism and consciousness as two orders of reality and, in their intrinsic relation, as 'effect' and 'cause'. (MERLEAU-PONTY, Maurice. 1967, p. 2).

What, then, is the solution? The paradigmatic answer indicates the path — constant throughout the author's work — of conciliation: to find something in the naturalism of science which, once reworked and understood, persists within a transcendental philosophy (Idem, p. 2), finding therein a place proper to it. In other words, this is one of the great questions of phenomenology, and notably of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology: to understand the relation between the Nature and the Transcendental — between the empirical and the transcendental.

From the outset, the proposal to find something of naturalism that is preserved within the transcendental points in two privileged directions — which indeed set the parameters of the author's project –: not only to affirm the non-separation between the transcendental and the empirical, but to recognize in them a kind of reciprocal "presence," in some way constituting each other; and, as a consequence, the necessity to reformulate these terms, no longer understood from the vantage of their mutual opposition or exclusion, but through the affirmation of a certain primary unity whose meaning must be recognized and made explicit.

It is precisely to address this issue—and this point is central to understanding the author's thought—that the recourse to the notion of behavior is called for. As Merleau-Ponty states, still in the fifth paragraph of the Introduction, this notion seems important precisely because, taken in itself, it is neutral with respect to the classical distinction between the psychic and the physiological, and "may give us the opportunity to define them anew" (MERLEAU-PONTY, Maurice, 1967, p. 2).

Let us dwell on this point. The notion of behavior has a quite precise and central function: to find a means of articulation between naturalism and psychologism and, in more general terms, a space of conciliation between the transcendental and the empirical. It is

a broad project that reprises Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological matrix and orients his work.

Still in the Introduction, once the sense of the appeal to behavior has been described, the author proceeds to set out — again succinctly and precisely — the path the book will take in treating its theme. As a point of departure, he proposes a discussion of the "atomistic interpretation" of behavior — figured in the conception of simple and complex behaviors, with Pavlov's theory as a principal reference; next, he develops a discussion with behaviorism and with Gestalt theory, from which it becomes possible to redefine the notion of consciousness, which will then be understood as structure (Idem). Having traced this path, it remains to investigate the mode of existence of these structures, the theme of the third chapter and a particularly important point, since it is in fact related to the proposal of a distinctive understanding of the notion of structure, tied to Merleau-Ponty's more general project and, in particular, to this search for a conciliation between the empirical and the transcendental.

Thus, already in its brief Introduction, Merleau-Ponty sketches a clear proposal and itinerary that bring out the centrality and the meaning the notion of structure must assume: to undo the antithesis between the psychic and the physiological (and, by means of it, between the transcendental and the empirical), by making explicit the understanding of structure as a "new mode of existence," whose meaning remains open to philosophical inquiry[3].

Pathology

For our discussion concerning the question of development and, in particular, the way in which the notion of structure can assist us in articulating change and permanence, multiplicity and unity, I will work here especially on two points: the philosopher's understanding of pathology and his first description of the notion of structure — topics that, as we shall see, are correlated and implicated in one another.

Starting from the discussion of the theory of simple reflexes, Merleau-Ponty's first point of interest is to show that behavior cannot be explained by a simple relation between

[3] The book, which for years occupied a secondary place in studies on the author, has been receiving increasing attention among scholars and researchers. In more recent writings, several researchers have devoted themselves to the theme of structure; I cite here, as reference, two studies already regarded as benchmarks—Renaud Barbaras, especially where he articulates Merleau-Ponty's thought with that of Bergson, and Étienne Bimbenet—now classic references in the debate.

"stimulus" and "receptor," understood as a causal and, above all, linear articulation. This hypothesis presupposes an atomistic and causal view of behavior; according to it, there would be, on either side, isolable and determinable points, objectively extractable, and between them an invariable necessary relation.

However, the author shows, it is not possible to demonstrate that there in fact exists and is perceived "a" stimulus, understood as a fixed and isolable element, with respect to which a constant linear effect would be established (MERLEAU-PONTY, Maurice, 1967). On the contrary — and this thesis will recur throughout the text, constantly revisited and grounded in different ways —, every stimulus operates, in principle, already as a certain configuration, as a relational whole. In this sense, for Merleau-Ponty there are no punctual stimuli, but always the operation of a whole: a primary articulation among elements that are correlated in principle and that act in an integrated manner—and, thus, give form to a situation or a constellation (Idem).

Thus, the stimulus is itself already a certain general configuration, an articulation proposed by the perceived, and it is grasped by the one who relates to it in an integral manner, by the *body*[4] of an active organism. Correlatively, reception is already a singular and proper form by which behavior organizes itself (corporeally and perceptually) in order to take in this configuration. So understood, "excitation" is not an external element, but something intrinsically bound to the organism, a moment of its response — which is therefore not a passive or mechanical reaction. Correlatively, insofar as it is a response, this action is also neither unmotivated nor absolute (which would reinstate the idea of a constituting consciousness). Excitation is thus understood as the body's conforming to what appears to it, a movement in which both are configured: an encounter between the situation proposed and the response that incorporates it—without which that which is proposed would not appear to the organism; but which remains insufficient to posit it or to bring it effectively into existence.

In this way, what the analysis of the supposed relation between stimuli and receptors (between the "environment" and the organism) ultimately reveals is that there is no atomistic, causal relation in behavior — this is, in fact, the thesis the author seeks through his confrontation with reflex theory. There is no moment in which the stimulus acts in a punctual and isolated manner, and there is no moment in which the body, correlatively,

[4] Given the space at our disposal and the scope proposed, the notion of body— a central theme in Merleau-Ponty's work—will be addressed here only tangentially.

receives it in a passive and fragmented way. On the contrary, there is a unitary, systemic, and integrated whole in which both cooperate, and within which it becomes impossible to distinguish one completely from the other.

Having circumscribed this first aspect, Merleau-Ponty can then turn to the question on which he will linger longer—precisely as an example and unfolding of the insufficiency of atomistic theories, and as a privileged elucidation of that other logic of behavioral functioning that escapes reflex theory: the study of pathologies.

A recurring theme in the author's reflection, the description of pathological behaviors occupies a central methodological place in his work, always grounded in an understanding of pathology not as a lack or distortion with respect to a supposed normal state. According to Merleau-Ponty, rather than a "deficient" functioning, what pathology effects is an oriented modulation of behavior, a reconfiguration of the ensemble of its functions whose meaning must be understood intrinsically. As we shall see, pathology operates as a systemic restructuring of behavior and thus still as a unity (more or less integrated with the history and development of that behavior), and therefore as an expression of its intrinsic dynamics of reconfiguration, of change without rupture. For this reason, analyses of pathology do not concern the explanation of a particularity of behavior, but rather the description of its general meaning and functioning — that is, the description of the very structure of behavior.

As the philosopher shows, reflex theory claimed that pathological behavior would be related to the presence or absence of certain reflex mechanisms or devices, specific circuits whose dysregulation (by excess or by lack) would entail a determinate failure of functioning:

> Pathological behavior must be understood by subtraction from normal behavior; we treat illness as a mere deficiency or, in any case, as a negative phenomenon; we see that there is not truly any event in the organism. (MERLEAU-PONTY, Maurice, 1967, p. 18).

The theory would arbitrarily presuppose autonomous, fixed, and stable circuits, and pathology would remain linked to some of them in particular, restricted to determinate sectors of the organism, objectively extractable. However, Merleau-Ponty argues, this is not how illness operates—as the subtraction of an isolated part of behavior, as a circumscribed lack.

On the contrary, its essential point, which objective thought, especially reflex theory, remains unable to grasp, lies in its configuration as a global and general alteration of

functioning: pathology does not entail a quantitative change, that is, more or fewer sectors in operation, but a qualitative alteration of behavior, a rearrangement or restructuring of the whole in which the direction, meaning, and value of the whole are reconfigured (ibid.). Even if illness is more closely related to one sector of behavior, the author's various analyses show that it never allows itself to be isolated or segmented within that sector; its implications necessarily appear in and reverberate across the whole. It always operates systemically. Thus, pathology always involves a typology of situations; it affects an entire field or dimension of behavior. A level of action is reconfigured, behavior is qualitatively altered, a meaning is reconfigured, and the organism thus assumes, in a unified way, a pathology or a pathological structure.

Here, at the heart of this discussion, we find a fundamental point in the author's proposal, with notable scope for his entire reflection: the recognition and elucidation of the intrinsic bond that exists between the particularity of each sector and the totality of behavior. In broader philosophical terms, between part and whole, a central thesis in Merleau-Ponty's work.

> [Illness] is a new signification of behavior, common to the multitude of symptoms, and the relation of the essential problem to the symptoms is no longer that of cause to effect, but rather the logical relation of principle to consequence or of signification to sign. (MERLEAU-PONTY, Maurice, 1967, p. 70)

In this passage, which is central for us, the author makes explicit the understanding of pathology as the expression of a logic that is proper, intrinsic, and structural: not split between cause and effect, but configured by the organic articulation that exists between principle and consequence and, particularly fruitful in his work, between sign and signification. It is, thus, a mode of organization of the whole that is not made by an exterior composition of its parts but, on the contrary, is unified precisely by the intrinsic articulation between them and the whole, a spontaneous configuration endowed with an immanent meaning — one that makes each partial element entail a reverberation across the whole at the same time that each of these elements necessarily takes it up and manifests it.

It is this reversibility between part and whole—their reciprocal implication—that is the central theme upon which the analysis of pathologies sheds light. As the example of the nervous system shows, it is that "(...) 'place' where a total 'image' of the organism is elaborated, where the local state of each part is expressed—though in a way that still needs to be specified." (MERLEAU-PONTY, Maurice, 1967, p. 22). Already pointing toward yet another important element in the author's philosophy, pathology makes explicit an understanding of unity in which the part must be understood as an expression of the whole

and, reciprocally, in which the whole appears as a general expression figured in each of its parts[5].

Pathology, in short, reveals a new logic and a new unity—since they are forged by the intrinsic (spontaneous and expressive) articulation between multiplicity and unity, between the particular and the ensemble. Unity is the expression of this mode of articulation intrinsic to the parts; each part is a mode of singularization or differentiation of the unity of the whole.

Thus, each time a pathological behavior is assumed (or incorporated), there occurs a general rearrangement of the different sectors with the aim of preserving the systemic functioning of the ensemble, safeguarding the threatened functionalities and the unity of the whole. This proper movement — in the case of pathology, a new equilibrium or the attempt to return to the former — confirms behavior as a global and dynamic unity, an operation in which each element is modulated and required according to the general law that expresses itself in the ensemble and that operates toward privileged states of equilibrium. It is therefore neither a conscious deliberation — a positional behavior — nor a matter of chance or a fortuitous event, but the intrinsic operation by which behavior maintains its unity:

> These facts are therefore essential for us, for they highlight, between blind mechanism and intelligent behavior, an oriented activity that classical mechanicism and intellectualism fail to account for. (MERLEAU-PONTY, Maurice, 1967, p. 41)

Between an autonomous mechanicism and a deliberate activity, pathology unveils the presence of a direction—a telos intrinsic to behavior — a kind of operative and spontaneous unity configured by the very articulation of its parts: a dynamic system that remains cohesive and integrated. Thus we have the occasion to see emerge a core element in Merleau-Ponty's philosophical project, both in this book and more generally in his work: the recognition and elucidation of another sense of unity — proper to behavior and, as we shall see, to structure — that cannot be described according to the alternative logic of modern thought. An operative, spontaneous, and internal unity, configured by the relation of its parts, affirming the constitutive coexistence between part and whole.

[5] That is, it points to the centrality that the notion of expression will come to assume in the author's philosophy—and in a particularly interesting way, as a notion that "still needs to be specified," a task to which Merleau-Ponty will devote an important part of his studies.

Structure

Having made this more general move, in which we reconstructed the initial description proposed by the author concerning pathology, we can now, still following the sequence of the text's argumentative movement, approach the notion of structure[6], since it is precisely through the description of pathological behaviors that it is first presented.

As we have seen, pathology appears as a privileged site for making explicit, within behavior, the spontaneous and irreducible articulation between the partial and the totality. Its signification inscribes itself in the whole; the latter reorganizes itself so that the pathological dynamic may be instituted; at the same time, one field remains privileged, the systemic structure emphasizing one of its sectors. The central point, as we have seen, is that we are dealing with a whole that changes to the extent that each of its parts is modified, and reciprocally with parts that are remodeled in accordance with the alterations of this whole, in other words, with a mutual configuration between them.

This understanding is what allows the philosopher to begin to circumscribe the book's central concept, the notion of structure. The spontaneous reversibility between the terms, in which one is already the expression of the other, assumes a fundamental place in it. Understood from within this non-oppositional logic, the principal characteristic of structure will be precisely the intrinsic and spontaneous articulation between part and totality:

> For 'forms' and, in particular, physical systems are defined as total processes whose properties are not the sum of those that the isolated parts would possess—more precisely, as total processes that may be indiscernible from one another while their 'parts,' compared one by one, differ in absolute magnitude; in other words, transposable wholes. We shall say that there is form wherever the properties of a system are modified by any change brought to a single one of its parts and, conversely, are preserved insofar as all of them change while maintaining among themselves the same relation. (MERLEAU-PONTY, Maurice, 1967, pp. 49–50)

Total processes and transposable wholes, forms are the "place" where the unity of the ensemble occurs through the preservation of the relation among its parts and where, reciprocally, each partial modification reverberates systemically across the whole, preserving it in its internal cohesion. This is the first, and fundamental, description of the notion of structure proposed by the author in the text.

[6] Throughout the book, the author uses the terms *form* and *structure* in a practically indistinct way, as almost synonyms. Although it is still possible to discern small differences in the use of each term over the course of the argument, for the purposes of the present discussion we will maintain this indistinction, privileging (in cases that are not direct quotations) the use of the term *structure*.

There are, therefore, forms whenever this constitutive interweaving between the particular and the totality is affirmed, in which their articulation is so organic that the configuration of the one is accomplished by means of the other. As pathology showed, the change in the parts obeys the general sense of the unity, to the same extent that the general sense of the unity reverberates the constancy of the change in the parts. Let us highlight here two aspects of this proposition in particular:

First, the understanding that this reciprocal implication between the partial elements and the whole amounts to the affirmation of a reciprocity (or perhaps even a reversibility) that is neither identitarian nor alternative, and that will unfold widely in the author's work, constantly referred to his critique of the insufficiency of the modern model of constitution — particularly that of representation, according to which an operator external to the diversity of elements would effect the synthesis of the multiple, conferring unity upon disparate elements[7]. Against the idea of a constituting instance that would itself be the principle of unification — pure synthetic activity — we now have the understanding that multiplicity itself is unified according to a logic proper to the whole. Equivalently, this logic is not strange to the multiple, but resounds from it and in relation to it, within it.

We come, then, to the second point. The idea that this articulation, once detached from the model of constitution, resorts to a new operator that refers it to another mode of configuration: the notion of difference. One of the most important and original points in Merleau-Ponty's notion of structure lies precisely in the centrality that the notion of difference comes to occupy — especially in this understanding, gradually constructed, of a difference that unifies. As we have seen, what gives unity to the whole is not its identity, but precisely the constancy of its change; that is, unity is not synonymous with identity. To be one is distinct from being identical. Indeed, it is even the contrary of that.

These two fundamental points bring a profoundly original perspective to Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the theme, within a horizon still little explored by a significant portion of his readers. Within the logic of structure, unity does not amount to a fixed identity, to the immutability of the whole, but rather to its inverse: the constancy of its internal, self-regulated process of differentiation, an expression of a proper, processual logic that affirms and particularizes itself in each of its singular moments.

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[7] Especially in light of the developments that Cartesian thought assumed throughout the modern tradition, extensively examined by Merleau-Ponty.
We have been working on this theme throughout our studies on the author, highlighting the original sense that the notion of difference acquires within his philosophy, notably in its ontological implications.

By its regularity and intrinsic character, difference secures the general unity; by its modification, it secures the singularity and diversity of its internal moments. Its change follows an intrinsic law, operating in view of a state of equilibrium intrinsic to the very structure, thereby ensuring the cohesion, permanence, and general sense of behavior—an integrated and articulated unity. At the same time, however, insofar as each partial element expresses, in its own way, this general sense, this unity remains open, plastic, dynamic; each moment singularizes it in a distinct and diacritical way.

This understanding will be extensively developed throughout Merleau-Ponty's work, and here we have in mind notably some of his most important analyses, such as those concerning perception and temporality, for example[8]. We can thus witness the emergence of yet another important and original axis of his oeuvre: the initial descriptions of a notion of difference that, opening the horizon for much of what will take place in the second half of the twentieth century in France, will occupy a central role in the author's ontology.

All this being said, if we now return to the question of structure, and to our main theme, we can finally understand how this process of differentiation intrinsic to it — the spontaneous referentiality that exists between part and whole — is able, at one and the same time, to secure the coherence of the ensemble, which moves in an integrated and relational manner, and its non-identity, since each partial moment opens the totality in a singular way, rejecting both static identity and the immanence of the self. Neither a mere juxtaposition of parts nor an identical unity, structure rejects both the classical conception of the object as pure exteriority and that of the subject as pure interiority. A set of diverse parts in a state of equilibrium or constant change (MERLEAU-PONTY, Maurice, 1967, p. 48), it figures as an intrinsically dynamic, mutable unity in which the process of self-differentiation is precisely what preserves the cohesion of the whole.

It is in this sense that it sheds light on the metaphysical theme from which we began, and the problem described at the outset—the understanding of the relation between unity and multiplicity, can gain a new, fruitful perspective within the phenomenological debate: the possibility of a re-comprehension of the terms and of their relation from an original conception of the notion of structure. In it, we have a type of unity that is configured through the multiple and, reciprocally, a multiplicity that operates by unification. As we have seen, not as parallel or juxtaposed elements, but as terms that mutually constitute one another,

[8] As described above, we have sought to pursue this question—especially regarding the unfolding of this perspective throughout the author's oeuvre—in other works of ours.

reciprocally constitutive: each affirms and configures itself in and through its relation with the other — a single structure, configured by the interweaving of unity and multiplicity.

It then becomes possible to shed some light as well on the question we proposed here: the possibility of articulating, intrinsically, development and permanence, change and unity. If we adopt, as theoretical frame, some of the principal elements brought forth by the notion of structure, we find ourselves before an original paradigm capable of rejecting the dualistic logic that renders transformation and conservation contradictory terms. Once behavior is understood as structure, development comes to be understood, intrinsically and constitutively, as that which unifies it, that which makes it a singularity — now unique and necessarily distinct. Unique in two senses of the term: as different from all others and, correlatively, as unitary in itself, a whole, a singularity. Distinct also in two senses: different from others, but also from itself, self-differentiated, non-identical.

In this way, structure can illuminate the articulation between personhood and a certain logic of development, as sought here, for it leads to the abandonment of the classical model of identity and its alternative presuppositions, even as it teaches a new configuration and a new sense of unity. If singularity is not identity — if unity itself is not identity — but that which is formed in and through change, development becomes its unitary axis, the guarantee of constancy and permanence. What unifies us is that in us which changes, the coherence of an intrinsic process of differentiation that, by its singularity, preserves itself, affirms itself, without ever becoming identical.

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