

take the images by their virtual centers. Superpose them. You get an verimage of images of self-varying deformation: a unity of continuous eparation from self. It is there that the virtual most literally, parabolically ppears.

This is to say that the virtual is best approached *topologically*. Topology is the science of self-varying deformation. A topological figure is efinied as the continuous transformation of one geometrical figure into another. Imagine a pliable coffee cup. Join the surfaces of the brim, energe the hole in the handle, and then stretch it so that all its sides are qually thick. You get a doughnut. You could then tie this doughnut into mplex knots. All of the geometrical figures you can create in this way e versions of the *same* topological figure. Topological unity is, in and of self, multiple. Of course, it is impossible actually to diagram every step a topological transformation.² Practically, only selected stills can be esented. Once again, the need arises to superpose the sequencings. It is ally in that superposition that the unity of the figure can be grasped as ich, in one stroke. That one stroke is the virtual image center of the igure. It is virtual because you cannot effectively see it or exhaustively agram it. It is an image because you can, for all of that, figure it, more or ss vaguely, in the imagination. Imagination is the mode of thought most ecisely suited to the differentiating vagueness of the virtual.³ It alone anages to diagram without stalling. Imagination can also be called intu-on: a thinking feeling. Not feeling something. Feeling thought—as such, its movement, as process, on arrival, as yet unthought-out and un-acted, postinstrumental and preoperative. Suspended. Looped out. agination is felt thought, thought only-felt, felt as only thought can be: sensibly unstill. Outside any given thing; outside any given sense, out-le actuality. Outside coming in. The mutual envelopment of thought id sensation, as they arrive together, pre—what they will have become, st beginning to unfold from the unfelt and unthinkable outside: of pro-ss, transformation in itself.

Whatever medium you are operating in, you miss the virtual unless u carry the images constructed in that medium to the point of topologi-l transformation. If you fall short of the topological, you will still grasp e possible (the differences in content and form considered as organiz-ble alternatives). You might even grasp the potential (the tension be-ween materially superposed possibilities and the advent of the new). But ver will you come close to the virtual.

Topology is a purely qualitative science. It is not empirical, if empirical investigation is meant as progressing from description to prediction. It has no predictive value.⁴ Incapable of directly referencing anything other than its own variations, it is more analogical than descriptive. It is not, however, an analog of anything in particular. It is not an analog in the everyday sense of a variation on a model. Here, there is no model. Only infolding and unfolding: self-referential transformation. The analog is *process*, self-referenced to its own variations. It resembles nothing outside itself. A topological image center literally makes the virtual appear, in felt thought. It is more apparitional than empirical. Sensation, always on arrival a transformative feeling of the outside, a feeling of thought, is the being of the analog. It is matter in analog mode.⁵ This is the analog in a sense close to the technical meaning, as a continuously variable impulse or momentum that can cross from one qualitatively different medium into another. Like electricity into sound waves. Or heat into pain. Or light waves into vision. Or vision into imagination. Or noise in the ear into music in the heart. Or *outside coming in*. Variable continuity across the qualitatively different: continuity of transformation. The analog impulse from one medium to another is what was termed in the last chapter a transduction. In sensation the thinking-feeling body is operating as a transducer. If sensation is the analog processing by body-matter of ongoing transformative forces, then foremost among them are forces of appearing as such: of coming into being, registering as becoming. The body, sensor of change, is a transducer of the virtual.⁶

Possibility, for its part, can be approached quantitatively. Probability is one of the forms the possible's quantitative expression may take. Probabilities are weightings of possibilities according to the regularity with which they might be expected to appear. Since probability approaches possibilities en masse, it approximates potential. Probability commits what René Thom calls an "imposture"⁷ by expressing the potential it approximates in a way that makes it seem that by quantifying, it had made the outcome of the potential predictable, effectively converting it into the mode of possibility. It hasn't, of course. It only approaches possibility, just as it only approximates potential. The problem is that modes of inactuality are stubbornly qualitative. Quantifying conversions of them always leave a qualitative remainder. This is easily seen with probability, in the fact that it has nothing at all to say about any given conjunction. It says nothing about what will happen in any given case. It is not about particu-