

# A SHOCK TO THOUGHT

Expression after Deleuze and Guattari

*Edited by Brian Massumi*



London and New York

**Also available as a printed book  
see title verso for ISBN details**

## A SHOCK TO THOUGHT

‘For those interested in new developments in aesthetics, literature and cultural theory, this will prove an indispensable volume and an inspiring collection.’

Keith Ansell Pearson, *University of Warwick*

‘This volume will have a prominent, indeed privileged, place at the interface between philosophical and aesthetic reflections within the burgeoning field of Deleuze–Guattari studies.’

Charles Stivale, *Wayne State University*

*A Shock to Thought* brings together a collection of outstanding essays that explore the implications of Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy of expression in a number of contemporary contexts: beauty vs. the sublime in post-modernism, sensation and politics, the conditions of cultural emergence, and the virtual in politics, poetry, dance, music and digital culture. The volume also makes available an interview with Guattari which clearly restates the ‘aesthetic paradigm’ that organizes both his and Deleuze’s work.

*A Shock to Thought* will be of interest to all those in philosophy, cultural studies and aesthetics.

**Brian Massumi** is in the Department of Communication at the Université de Montréal. He is the translator of Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus* and the author of *The User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari* and *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*.



# A SHOCK TO THOUGHT

Expression after Deleuze and Guattari

*Edited by Brian Massumi*



London and New York

First published 2002  
by Routledge  
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE  
Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada  
by Routledge  
29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001  
*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group*

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005.

“To purchase your own copy of this or any of Taylor & Francis or Routledge’s collection of thousands of eBooks please go to [www.eBookstore.tandf.co.uk](http://www.eBookstore.tandf.co.uk).”

© 2002 Brian Massumi for selection and editorial matter;  
individual chapters, respective authors

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A shock to thought: expression after Deleuze and Guattari /  
[edited by] Brian Massumi.  
p.cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

1. Literature—Aesthetics. 2. Aesthetics. 3. Deleuze, Gilles—Criticism and interpretation. 4. Guattari, Félix—Criticism and interpretation. I. Massumi, Brian.

PN45 .S416 2002

801'.93—dc21

2001058882

ISBN 0-203-99436-1 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN 0-415-23803-X (Print Edition)

ISBN 0-415-23804-8

# CONTENTS

<i>List of illustrations</i>	viii
<i>Notes on contributors</i>	ix
<i>Introduction</i>	xiii

## **Part 1**

### **That thinking feeling 1**

*...everything which introduces doubt  
about the position of mental images  
and their relationship to one another...\**

#### **1 Beauty: machinic repetition in the age of art 3**

MELISSA McMAHON

#### **2 Beauty lies in the eye 9**

STEVEN SHAVIRO

#### **3 Aesthetics: a place I've never seen 20**

STEPHEN ZAGALA

## **Part 2**

### **The superior empiricism of the human 45**

*...everything which disrupts the relationship between things  
and puts us in touch with certain more acute states of mind...\**

CONTENTS

<b>4 A bestiary of territoriality and expression: poster fish, bower birds, and spiny lobsters</b>	<b>47</b>
GARY GENOSKO	
<b>5 Literature, language, and the non-human</b>	<b>60</b>
ALAN BOURASSA	
<b>6 Exposure: Pasolini in the flesh</b>	<b>77</b>
MICHAEL HARDT	
<b>7 Cruel: Antonin Artaud and Gilles Deleuze</b>	<b>85</b>
CATHERINE DALE	
<b>8 Subjectless subjectivities</b>	<b>101</b>
PAUL BAINS	
<b>9 The dancer's body</b>	<b>117</b>
JOSÉ GIL	
<b>Part 3</b>	
<b>Forces of expression</b>	<b>129</b>
<i>...everything which provokes confusion without destroying the strength of an emergent thought...*</i>	
<b>10 Neo-archaism</b>	<b>131</b>
MANI HAGHIGHI	
<b>11 Diagram, inscription, sensation</b>	<b>149</b>
THOMAS LAMARRE	
<b>12 Sound ideas</b>	<b>171</b>
ADEN EVENS	
<b>13 Putting the virtual back into VR</b>	<b>188</b>
ANDREW MURPHIE	

CONTENTS

<b>14 Trans-subjective transferential borderspace</b>	<b>215</b>
BRACHA LICHTENBERG ETTINGER	
<b>15 From transference to the aesthetic paradigm: a conversation with Félix Guattari</b>	<b>240</b>
BRACHA LICHTENBERG ETTINGER	
<i>Index</i>	246

\*ANTONIN ARTAUD, CITED IN CATHERINE DALE

## ILLUSTRATIONS

3.1	Mathew Jones, <i>A Place I've Never Seen</i> (detail), Braille alphabet printed on tissue, 1993	28
3.2	Mathew Jones, <i>A Place I've Never Seen</i> (installation view), Museu de Arte Moderna do São Paulo, 1994	31
3.3	Mathew Jones, <i>A Place I've Never Seen</i> (installation view), Toronto Photographer's Workshop, 1995	33
3.4	Mathew Jones, <i>A Place I've Never Seen</i> (installation view), The ClockTower Studio, PSI, New York, 1996	38
11.1	The Yoshinobu Section from the Nishihonganji edition of 'The Collection of Thirty-Six Poets', Nishihonganji Temple	150
11.2	The Ise Section from 'The Collection of Thirty-Six Poets', Ishiyama-gire	152
12.1	A graph of an ideal sound wave	172
14.1	Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger. From the series 'Eurydice', 1992-6	216
14.2	Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger. From the series 'Eurydice', 1992-6	221
14.3	Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger. From the series 'Eurydice', 1992-6	225
14.4	Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger. From the series 'Eurydice', 1992-6	231
14.5	Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger. From the series 'Eurydice', 1992-6	233
14.6	Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger. From the series 'Eurydice', 1992-6	235

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Paul Bains** is the translator of *Power and Invention* by Isabelle Stengers (1997) and of Félix Guattari's *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm* (with Julian Pefanis) (1995). His recently completed doctorate from Murdoch University, Australia was on *The Primacy of Relations*. He continues to research the topic of minds and their brains with the invaluable guidance of the Center for Neurobiological Investigations, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Argentine Republic.

**Alan Bourassa** is an assistant English professor at St. Thomas University in Fredericton, New Brunswick. He is currently working on a book entitled *Writing the Non-Human: Faulkner, Wharton and the Anglo-American Novel*.

**Catherine Dale** is a doctoral student in the English Department at the University of Melbourne.

**Aden Evens** is a postdoctoral fellow at the Pembroke Center at Brown University. His book-in-progress reflects his interests in philosophy, cultural theory, music, mathematics, and the sciences. Like many interdisciplinary scholars, he moves around a lot, but his family and piano are in Boston.

**Gary Genosko** is Canada Research Chair in Sociology at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario. He is the author of *Félix Guattari: An Aberrant Introduction* (forthcoming), and the editor of *The Guattari Reader* (1996) and *Deleuze and Guattari: Critical Assessments* (Routledge, 2001).

**José Gil** is professor of philosophy at the University of Lisbon and at the Collège International de Philosophie in Paris. He is the author of *Metamorphoses of the Body* (1998) and *Fernando Pessoa ou la métaphysique des sensations* (1988).

**Mani Haghighi** lives in Tehran and Toronto. He is the Persian translator of Michel Foucault's *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*, and has edited an anthology of postmodern texts, *The Aporia of Signs* (1995).

**Michael Hardt** is associate professor of literature at Duke University. He is the author of *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy* (1993) and co-author with Antonio Negri of *Labor of Dionysus* (1994) and *Empire* (2000).

**Thomas Lamarre** is associate professor of East Asian Studies at McGill University. He is the author of *Uncovering Heian Japan: An Archaeology of Sensation and Inscription* (2001) and *Shadows on the Screen: Tanizaki Junichirō on Cinema and Oriental Aesthetics* (forthcoming). He is currently co-editing a volume on 'The Impacts of Modernities' for *Traces: A Multilingual Series of Cultural Theory*.

**Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger** is an internationally renowned artist, feminist theorist, and psychoanalyst. She is Professor of Psychoanalysis and Aesthetics at Leeds University. Her recent solo exhibitions include The Drawing Center (New York), Museum of Modern Art (Oxford), The Israel Museum (Jerusalem) and the Palais des Beaux Arts (Brussels). She is the author of *Regard et Espace-de-bord matrixiels* (La Letter Volée), forthcoming from the University of Minnesota Press under the title *Matrixial Gaze and Borderspace*.

**Brian Massumi** teaches in the communication department of the Université de Montréal. He is the author of *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (2002), *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari* (1992), and (with Kenneth Dean) *First and Last Emperors: The Absolute State and the Body of the Despot* (1993).

**Melissa McMahon** is completing a Ph.D. on Deleuze and Kant in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Sydney. She is translator of numerous published articles in the area of modern French philosophy and film theory, and most recently translated and introduced an article by Antona Soulez on Wittgenstein for a special issue of *Hypatia* on contemporary French women philosophers.

**Andrew Murphie** is a Senior Lecturer in Media and Communications at the University of New South Wales, Sydney. He has published on a range of issues: performance and the visual arts, popular music, contemporary cultural theory, virtual media and digital aesthetics. He is currently writing a book in the area of culture and technology with John Potts and is working on two other books on machines, ethics and aesthetics. He has in the past worked as a marketing manager and production manager for arts companies, and as a freelance theatre director.

**Steven Shaviro** teaches in the Cinema Studies Program at the University of Washington. He is the author of *Passion and Excess* (1990), *The Cinematic Body* (1993) and *Doom Patrols* (1997).

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Stephen Zagala** (né O'Connell) is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research at the Australian National University. His thesis is concerned with the cultivation of dynamic visual forms in the Melanesian archipelago of Vanuatu. He continues to travel with Deleuze, but prefers to keep him concealed under a newly acquired pith helmet.



# INTRODUCTION

## Like a thought

*Brian Massumi*

because they've said too much to be born  
and said too much in being born  
not to be reborn  
and take a body

(Artaud, 1999: 88)

### **The world does not exist outside of its expressions<sup>1</sup>**

A clearer statement of the importance of the concept of expression for the philosophy of Deleuze and Deleuze–Guattari would be hard to find. Their entire ontology, this formula proclaims, revolves around it. A less fashionable concept, for late twentieth-century European thought, would also be hard to find. For many years, across many schools, ‘expression’ has been anathema. The underlying assumption has been that any expressionism is an uncritical subjectivism. Expression conjures up the image of a self-governing, reflective individual whose inner life can be conveyed at will to a public composed of similarly sovereign individuals – rational atoms of human experience in voluntary congregation, usefully sharing thoughts and experiences. In a word: ‘communication’. Communicational models of expression share many assumptions. These include the interiority of individual life, its rationality, an effective separation into private and public spheres, the voluntary nature of the collective bonds regulating that separation, the possibility of transparent transmission between privacies or between the private and the public, and the notion that what is transmitted is fundamentally information. All of these assumptions have been severely tested by structuralist, poststructuralist, post-modern, and postpostmodern thought. Communication has long since fallen on hard times and with it, expression.

Communication, Deleuze and Guattari agree, is a questionable concept. Yet they hold to expression. ‘*What takes the place of communication is a kind of expressionism.*’<sup>2</sup>

## Neither common form nor correspondence

So closely bound have the concepts of expression and communication become that Deleuze and Guattari's insistence on discarding one while retaining the other might well seem quixotic. There are certainly consequences to going that route, and Deleuze and Guattari are not shy about them. A willingness is required to forego certain bedrock notions, with potentially unsettling repercussions even for anti-communicationalists.

'One can never', Deleuze and Guattari begin, 'assign the form of expression the function of simply representing, describing, or averring a corresponding content: there is neither correspondence nor conformity' (1987: 86). So far so good. This is a restatement of the well-known critique of the referential function of language that is presupposed by the communicational model, and the renunciation of which unites its foes. Deleuze and Guattari join the critics, then step away. They go on to say that 'it would be an error to believe that content determines expression by causal action, even if expression is accorded the power not only to "reflect" content but to act upon it in an active way' (1987, 89).

The assertion that expression is actively formative of its content, or its 'objects', is a constructivist strategy underpinning most contemporary anti-communicational semiotics. It performs a causal twist enabling semiotically savvy ideology critique. 'Discourse', by this account, constructs the subject by constructing the objects in polarity with which the subject forms. The subject's expression is still causally linked to its content, but the nature of the link has changed. What traditionally appeared as a one-way determination of expression by a mirroring of or a moulding by its content (the correspondence or conformity of 'representing, describing, or averring') reappears as a formative polarity (a subject-object dialectic). It is less that the subject willfully speaks its contents than that it is spoken, unwitting, by its discursively orchestrated object-relations. If the spoken subject expresses anything, it is – indirectly – its own circuitous determination: the anything-but-transparent dialectic of its orchestrated formation. The ultimate content of all expression is this occulted determinative power incumbent in discourse – which the critic has the counter-power, if not political duty, to uncover.

When Deleuze and Guattari call into question this dialectical solution, they are abandoning ideology critique along with its communicational nemesis. Why throw out baby-ideology with the dirty communicative bathwater? If you choose to abstain from both communication and ideology, what's left? Not 'postmodernism'.<sup>3</sup> From a Deleuze-Guattarian perspective these three approaches, for all their differences, have too much in common philosophically. What they share is an attachment to a concept of determination predicated, in one way or another, despite any protestations to the contrary, on conformity and correspondence.

Traditionally, for communicational purposes, expression is anchored to a 'content'. The content is viewed as having an objective existence prior and

exterior to the form of its expression. The assumed solidity of the content transfers, across the mirror-like correspondence or moulded conformity, into a trustworthiness of the subjective expression. Moulded, mirroring, expression faithfully conveys content: re-presents it at a subjective distance. This enables communication, understood as a faithful exchange of contents transmitted at a convenient distance from their objective emplacement. In this model, content is the beginning and end of communicative expression: at once its external cause and its guarantee of validity. This causal guarantee is crucial, because the subjective distancing upon which communication is predicated enables deception no less than exchange. If there were no common form or correspondence, who could say? And what? Anyone, anything – out of control. The ‘postmodern’ is an image of communication out of control. Seeming to have lost its mooring in objective conformity or correspondence, it appears uncaused, unmotivated, in endless, unguaranteed ‘slippage’.

One of the reasons Deleuze and Guattari find the basic communicational model questionable is that it assumes a world of already-defined things for the mirroring. Expression’s potential is straight-jacketed by this pre-definition. In *Logic of Sense* (1990a), Deleuze confronts the ‘propositional’ view of language underpinning this model, arguing that it allows three fundamental operations, none of which are up to the measure of expression’s potential: a three-sleeved straight-jacket. The first cuff, ‘designation’, concerns the faithfulness of the expression to the *particular* state of things with which it is in conformity or to which it corresponds: its objectivity. ‘Manifestation’ is the subjective correlate of designation. It pertains to the *personal* desires and beliefs owned up to by the designating ‘I’. ‘Signification’ is founded on the capacity of designation to apply beyond particulars to kinds, in other words to *general* ideas and their implications: ‘it is a question of the relation of the word to universal or general concepts, and of syntactic connections to the implications of the concept’.<sup>4</sup> If designation concerns the true and the false, signification concerns the *conditions* of truth and falsehood: ‘the aggregate of conditions under which the proposition’ would be ‘true’. ‘The condition of truth’, it must be noted, ‘is not opposed to the false, but to the absurd’ (Deleuze, 1990: 14–15).

The wilful absurdism of postmodernisms of the Baudrillardian kind took off from signification. The ‘simulation’ they celebrated is an unmooring of the conditions of truth from the true and the false: from designation. Unhinged from designation, lacking a referent, the productive operation of the conditions of truth becomes indistinguishable from a proliferating absurdity: an absurdity by ‘unmotivated’ excess of signification. These particular counter-conditions of absurdity, however, were staged by postmodernists insufficiently unbuttoned from the true – and arguably nostalgic for it – as a parody or ironic subversion of the truth rather than something other than it, to which it is ‘opposed’. Both parody and irony covertly conserve the true. They need the idea of a conformity or correspondence between expression and content as a

foil. Ultimately, the postmodern absurdity is to retain the true *in order*, repeatedly, to lampoon it by bracketing its objective anchoring. Why not just be done with it?<sup>5</sup> From a Deleuzian perspective, parody and irony protest too much. The way in which they performatively foreground the signifying virtuosity of the speaking or writing subject seem distinctly to manifest a personal desire for a certain kind (a cynical kind) of masterful presence. The ‘nostalgia’ their postmodern practitioners have sometimes been accused of may have betokened, even more than a residual attachment to the truth, an investment in manifestation: a nostalgia for the master-subject whose ‘death’ postmodernism manifestly announced.<sup>6</sup> The same might be said of a precursor of this form of postmodernism, surrealism. More sober postmodernisms were to find somewhere seriously absurd to take the unanchoring of the true: into the sublime.<sup>7</sup>

The ideological approach is in many ways closer to Deleuze and Guattari’s approach than either the communicational or postmodern, in spite of their frequent criticisms of it. It has major advantages over them. For one thing, it links the workings of language to a problematic of power, insisting on the intrinsic connection between language and extra-linguistic forces. It also breaks the symmetry between expression and things ‘as they are’ already. Models of mirroring or moulding – in a word, representational models – see the basic task of expression as faithfully reflecting a state of things. They focus on the ‘as is’, as it is taken up by language. Ideology critique focuses on the ‘what might be’. Its preoccupation is change. To open the way for change, it must break the symmetry between the saying and the said. It does this by transforming the content-expression correspondence into an asymmetry, as subject-object polarity. The question is displaced onto what governs their dialectic: how the two come together, or what mediates their interaction. Mediation steals centre stage from conformity and correspondence.

The problem for Deleuze and Guattari is that conformity and correspondence sneak back in through the back door. The subject formed through the dialectic does not simply mirror its objects. It embodies the system of mediation. It is a physical instantiation of that system. That is the ideological proposition: that a subject is made to be in conformity with the system that produced it, such that the subject reproduces the system. What reproduces the system is not what the subject says *per se*. The direct content of its expressions do not faithfully reflect the system, since the relation of the system to its own expressed content has been ‘mystified’ by mediation. The fundamental mystification consists in making the subject’s adhesion to the system appear as a choice. Mystified, the subject must be trained to truly express the system it has unwittingly been reproducing. This is the role of critique.

The subject does not express the system. It *is* an expression of the system. The system expresses itself in its subjects’ every ‘chosen’ deed and mystified word – in its very form of life (its habitus, as Pierre Bourdieu (2000: 256–85) would say). Where, in the conformity and correspondence between the life-

form of the subject and the system of power that produced it, has the potential for change gone? Conscious critique seems an unloaded weapon in the face of the relentless acting out of powers of conformity on the preconscious level of habitus. The only conscious force strong enough to counter those powers is self-interest: a subject must come to an unmystified consciousness of its own interests as occupying the position it does. But doesn't that lock the subject all the more firmly into position? And aren't decisions truly motivated by self-interest a matter of choice? Doesn't making a true choice depend on seeing through mystification to an analysis of the real state of affairs (designation), then faithfully conveying the general applicability of the ideological propositions arrived at (signification) to others of your class, as one sovereign individual in voluntary congregation, usefully sharing thoughts and experiences (manifestation)? Aren't we back at the same old communicational model? Designation, manifestation, signification resurgent. Perhaps insurgent. But is this change enough?

The move to save change by breaking the symmetries at the basis of the propositional view of language has back-fired. They return, in conformity and correspondence, as if in confirmation of the doctrine that production is always actually, systematically, reproduction. If production is reproduction, then life is trapped in a vicious circle: that of the systemic repetition of its own formation (wholesale or in self-interested part). Still the initial emphasis has shifted from form, as mirrored or moulded, to *formation*. And it has done so in a framework that broadens the vistas of expression. It is no longer a question of language narrowly defined. It is also a question of extra-linguistic forces operating through language, as well as unspoken systems of signs (what the configuration of objects in the social field, and their patterns of accessibility, indirectly 'tells' the subject-in-the-making of its assigned position). As we will see in the course of this introduction, Deleuze and Guattari agree that the subject is in a sense spoken by extra-linguistic forces of expression, and that this impersonal speaking is not a matter of choice. But they do not see anything 'hidden' to uncover, nor are they willing to reduce the expressing individual to an instantiation of a system. From their perspective, the force of expression and the linguistically formed exercises of power it often fuels are painfully evident. The force of expression, however, strikes the body first, directly and unmediatedly. It passes transformatively through the flesh before being instantiated in subject-positions subsumed by a system of power. Its immediate effect is a differing. It must be made a reproduction. The body, fresh in the throes of expression, incarnates not an already-formed system but a modification – a change. Expression is an event. The ideological question of how to think open a space for change in a grid-locked positional system is turned on its head. The task for a theory of expression is how to account for stability of form, given event. The key is to remember that 'emergence, mutation, change affect composing forces, not composed forms' (Deleuze, 1988: 87).

## A net on potential

Formation cannot be accounted for if a common form is assumed, whether between content and expression or subject and system. If the world exhibits conformities or correspondences they are, precisely, *produced*. To make them the principle of production is to confuse the composing with the composed, the process with the product. Deleuze and Guattari call this 'tracing' (*décalque*) (1987: 12–15). A tracing approach overlays the product onto the process, on the assumption that they must be structurally homologous. The assumption is that you can conceptually superimpose them to bring out a common logical outline. When this procedure is followed, product and process appear as versions of each other: copies. Production coincides with reproduction. Any potential the process may have had of leading to a significantly different product is lost in the overlay of what already is.

Deleuze and Guattari take a simple step that carries them a long way from this procedure: they say that there is more than one form. The cornerstone of their theories of expression, in their solo as well as collaborative writings, is the principle that contents and expressions do not share a form. They each have their own form (or forms). Loosely basing themselves on the work of the linguist Louis Hjelmslev, they contend that there are any number of forms of content and forms of expression, each with their own substance or specific materiality. The tricky part is that there is no form of forms to bridge the gap. Deleuze and Guattari do not make this move in order to ascend to some meta-level. Between a form of content and a form of expression there is only the process of *their passing into each other*: in other words, an immanence. In the gap between content and expression is the immanence of their mutual 'deteritorialization'. This blurring of the boundaries is *in addition to* their formal distinction.

In dialogue with Michel Foucault, they use the example of the prison (1987: 66–7). The prison itself is the form of content. Of course a prison building is not a prison without prisoners. The prisoners' bodies are the substance of content for the prison as form of content. Of course not only prisoners' bodies enter a prison, guards and visitors do also. A body in a prison is not a prisoner unless it has been condemned for a crime. The judge's pronouncement of guilt contributes a substance to the form of content. A verbal expression has, in effect, passed into content. The pronouncement of guilt is a performative use of language, defined as an utterance which transforms the attributes and physical conditions of a body or state of things simply by being said. The performative is a direct avenue for the passage of expression into content. Deleuze and Guattari argue that every use of language carries a certain performative force, if only because it presupposes a conventional context of intelligibility, and that conventional girding brings pressure to bear toward a certain manner of response. Every utterance is an 'order-word' in the sense that it moulds, subtly or directly, the potential

actions of its addressees. This 'moulding' by language is very different from the mirror-like moulding of the communicational model. There is no resemblance between a pronouncement of guilt and an imprisonment. The performative relation of the expression to its content is not representational. The performative is a speech *act* which modifies the target body's own potential for action: it is an action on an action. As in the ideological model, the content is actively modified by expression. It is also not without return channels for affecting expression. However, whatever back-action there may be does not set in motion a dialectic. The reciprocal actions of content and expression have to pass a gap of non-resemblance which breaks not only the symmetry between content and expression assumed by the communicational model, but also the polarity on which ideological models' dialectical method is based. What happens in the break is the crux of the matter for Deleuze and Guattari.

The pronouncement of guilt is not the form of expression for the prison regime, but a linguistic contributor to its content. What then is the form of expression? What it is decidedly not, according to Foucault, is the meaning of the word 'prison'. Construing it that way limits expression once again to the conceptual or semantic level of designation, manifestation and signification, entirely missing the 'action on action', the direct, mutual involvement of language and extra-linguistic forces. In Foucault's analysis in *Discipline and Punish* (1977), as read by Deleuze and Guattari, the form of expression for which the prison is the form of content is 'delinquency'. The actions in the social field leading to the emergence of the modern prison system were most effectively expressed in a varied and widespread discourse on delinquency, not through philosophical or semantic reflections on the meaning of 'prison'. There was no essential connection between delinquency as form of expression and the prison as form of content. There is no logical or teleological reason why that particular articulation had to be. Its power was the cumulative result of a thousand tiny performative struggles peppered throughout the social field. The connection was *made*, and it was made collectively, under the control of no individual subject.

As aggregate formations, expression-content articulations have a tendency to drift over time. 'Delinquency' would subsequently migrate, extending to a new form of content: the school. The school-form owed not a little to the strategies of containment implemented in the prison. Content and expression were re-articulating themselves, toward a new aggregate result. How it would all re-crystallize into a functioning system of power was at no point a fore-gone conclusion. Which content elements would make the migration? How would they re-couple with what expressive elements? What new expressions might pass over into content? Which might cease to? What elements from forms of expression other than delinquency and forms of content other than the prison would make contributions to the mix? Another thousand tiny struggles. For a re-articulation of this kind to eventuate, for anything new to

arise in the social field, established forms of content and expression must give of themselves. They shed functions, like so many seeds in search of new soil, or like branches for the grafting. It is of their cobbled-together nature to do so: to disseminate. And it is the inconstant nature of their sheddings to mutate as they disseminate. This mutational dissemination of transplantable functions is an instance of what Deleuze and Guattari call a 'deterritorialization'.

The point for Deleuze and Guattari is that in the drift of power formations 'there exist *intermediate states* between content and expression, expression and content ... through which a stratified system passes' (1987: 44). The system of established articulations passes into a mutational gap-state, filled with shed functions fallen free from their former implantations.<sup>8</sup> A deterritorialized function is no longer a function in the normal sense. What can you do with something that hasn't yet decided if it is to fall back in on the side of content or expression? What aim or object can it have as yet? What meaning? Nothing determinate. The articulatory sheddings are functions without the determinate functioning they will come to have: in a state of potential. Deleuze and Guattari call articulatory functions in an in-between state of mutational potential 'particles' of expression or 'assignifying signs'. If there is no individual subject capable of governing their drift, then what determines where they fall and what they grow into? What determines how they recombine and settle into an actual functioning as part of a new articulation or 'regime of signs'? Deleuze and Guattari call the orchestrator of expression the 'abstract machine'.

The 'machine' is abstract because the assignifying signs with which it concerns itself lack determinate form or actual content definition. Though abstract, they are not unreal. They are in transport. They constitute the dynamic 'matter' of expression. When they settle into rearticulation, they become 'substances': formed, functional elements of either content (a prisoner, for example) or expression (a phoneme perhaps). Deleuze and Guattari's matter of expression correlates with Hjelmslev's 'purport' (for which the French translation is *matière*). Purport, Hjelmslev writes, 'has no possible existence except through being substance for one form or another' (1969: 52)<sup>9</sup> It has no existence – only dynamic potential. It *comes into* existence through its capture by a content-expression articulation, as in a 'net'. Hjelmslev emphasizes the 'arbitrary' nature of this process. What is 'arbitrary' about it is the oddness of a quarry whose species does not preexist its capture, a prey whose determinate existence results from the casting of the hunter's net. Deleuze and Guattari do not favour the term arbitrary. It has too wan a logical ring for such an ontologically fraught struggle. From a Deleuze–Guattarian perspective, it would be better to say that the actual content of expression – what effectively comes to be signified, manifested, designated; its 'object' – *emerges* from expressive potential through a process of the capture of that potential, and that this emergence into being-determinate necessarily crosses a zone of systemic indeterminacy by virtue of which the whole affair is tinged with a

passing element of chance. To the logical ring of the arbitrary, Deleuze and Guattari respond with a contingent tinge to the emergent.

### The primacy of expression

‘There is a primacy of the collective assemblage of enunciation over language and words’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 90). The ‘collective assemblage of enunciation’ is the prong of the abstract machine that settles asignifying signs back into a functional form of expression (the ‘machinic assemblage of bodies’ is the prong that does the same for content). It is not only the emphasis on the collective nature of the process that is worth remarking. More radically, Deleuze and Guattari are suggesting that there is an impersonal expressive agency that is not only not restricted to language, but whose process takes precedence over its operations. Expression is not in a language-using mind, or in a speaking subject *vis à vis* its objects. Nor is it rooted in an individual body. It is not even in a particular institution, because it is precisely the institutional system that is in flux. Expression is abroad in the world – where the potential is for what may become. It is non-local, scattered across a myriad struggles over what manner of life-defining nets will capture and contain that potential in reproducible articulations, or actual functions. Determinate minds, subjects, bodies, objects, and institutions are the result. The subject, its embodiment, the meanings and objects it might own, the institutions that come to govern them, these are all conduits through which a movement of expression streams. Expression adopts them for its temporary forms and substances, towards its own furtherance, in ongoing self-redefinition. ‘The expressive is primary in relation to the possessive’ (1987: 316).

It was a moral precept of a certain era that one must ‘own’ one’s enunciativ position. An imperative was issued to speak responsibly from personal experience. But if expression is abroad in the world, it is not fundamentally ownable. It may well be morally domesticatable under certain conditions – many a moralizing capture through the ages attests to this – but only secondarily. ‘The “first” language, or rather the first determination of language, is “indirect discourse” – expression that finally cannot be attributed to a particular speaker. “Language is not content to go from a first party to a second party, from one who has seen to one who has not, but necessarily goes from a second party to a third party, neither of whom has seen”’ (1987: 76–7). Expression is always on the move, always engrossed in its own course, overspilling individual experience, nomadically evading responsibility. It is self-transporting, serially *across* experiences. ‘There is a self-movement of expressive qualities’ that momentarily crystallizes into actual objects and associated subject positions: ‘expressive qualities are auto-objective’ (1987: 317). Expression is captured in passing by its auto-objectifications, but only ever provisionally. In C.S. Peirce’s terms, it operates in the element of

‘thirdness’: already included in every passage from one to another is a potential relay to a third. Even as expression settles into a particular articulation, it is already extending what Deleuze and Guattari call ‘probe-heads’ to a next, as-yet unknown destination: already shedding of itself, in the interests of its moving on.<sup>10</sup> Expression’s self-movement is a continual stretch. Expression is tensile.

‘To express is not to depend upon; there is an autonomy of expression’.  
(1987: 317)

What expression is most emphatically not dependent upon in the first instance is any purportedly generally applicable moral rule assigning responsibility for it or toward it. There is indeed an ethics of expression, which Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge and accept as a central problem. They insist on the term ‘ethics’, as opposed to morality, because the problem in their eyes is not in any primary fashion that of personal responsibility. It is a basically pragmatic question of how one *performatively* contributes to the stretch of expression in the world – or conversely prolongs its capture. This is fundamentally a *creative* problem. Where expression stretches, potential determinately emerges into something new. Expression’s tensing is by nature creative. Its passing brings into definite being. It is *ontogenetic*. To tend the stretch of expression, to foster and inflect it rather than trying to own it, is to enter the stream, contributing to its probings: this is co-creative, an aesthetic endeavour. It is also an ethical endeavour, since it is to ally oneself with change: for an ethics of emergence. The English translators of Guattari’s last work were right to subtitle its project an ‘ethico-aesthetic paradigm’.<sup>11</sup>

### Stretch to intensity

Pragmatically, an ethics of expression involves producing ‘atypical expressions’.

The atypical expression constitutes a cutting edge of deterritorialization of language, it plays the role of *tensor*; in other words, it causes language to tend toward the limit of its elements, forms, or notions, toward a near side or beyond of language. The tensor effects a kind of transitivity of the phrase, causing the last term to react upon the preceding term, back through the entire chain. It assures an intensive and chromatic treatment of language.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 99)

‘Agrammaticality’ brings out the tensile dimension of language by stretching its elements beyond the limit of their known forms and conventional functions. The atypical expression pulls language into a direct contact with its own futurity. It forcibly twists it into glints of forms, hints of contents, as-yet func-

tionless functions which, however ‘unmotivated’ or ‘arbitrary’, *could be*. Because they just were, after a fashion (germinally). The atypical expression puts the screws on the system of language in a way that forces its actual operation to overlap with its zone of potential. The same experimental torture also brings out the transitive element of thirdness, in a recursive mode, by ‘causing the last term to react upon the preceding term, back through the entire chain’. The combined result is a *recursive futurity*. Language folds back on its own unfolding. Wrapped up in itself, language falls into a state of utter tension: intensity. Language has been made to coincide, ‘on the near side or beyond’ of its conventional usage, with its own *intensity*.

A recursive futurity is one of the ways Deleuze and Guattari talk about the *virtual*. It is a crucial element of their theory of expression that ethico-aesthetic practices of expression can directly access virtual forces. These are the forces of ontogenesis responsible for the stream of novation, caught at the moment of their just emerging: expression’s momentum.<sup>12</sup> Certain practices of expression are capable of actualizing the momentum of emergence *as such*, uncaptured. This is expression in its free state, under formation, tortured but unbound (tortured and for that very reason unbound). The hitch is that to catch expression in the forming requires allying with forces of systematic *deformation*. It takes stretching and twisting: pain. The agrammatical experiment is a cry of expression.

Bearing in mind the performative dimension of expression, the ‘atypical expression’ could as well be a gesture, operating on systematizations of non-verbal expression. More challengingly, it could address the hinge between non-verbal and verbal expression, experimenting with the limits not only of a certain form of expression, but with the very nature of the content-expression articulation itself: how bodies and words couple and struggle; whether or in what circumstances they might pass into each other, as in expression’s performative passing into content; how their mutual immanence must be *lived*, experienced most directly and intensely. If the agrammatical verbal expression is an ontogenetic cry, then the gestural atypical expression is its accompanying dance. So deforming can this ‘tarantella’ be that its asignifying violence can wrack the body and risk the life lending themselves to the process: a danger named Artaud. ‘He danced his did’.<sup>13</sup>

### The autonomy of expression

It was said earlier that the ‘abstract machine’ was the ‘expressive agency’. This is misleading. Putting it in those terms risks ‘hypostasizing’ the *process* that is expression: treating it as a substantive. To do so is to commit the ‘tracing’ error of placing the process of emergence on a level with its substantial products.

There is no entity to expression. There is no super-subject behind its movement. Its emerging into words and things is always an *event* before it is a designation, manifestation, or signification propositionally and provisionally

attached to a subject. There is no ‘form of forms’ underneath or beyond, however such a thing might be conceived (whether as an ideological system, transcendental ego, or collective unconscious). While there is no form of forms, there *is* the event of events: a coming to pass through comings to be; the world as becoming. Hypostasizing process into a super-subject is the error of idealism (the ‘ideo-’ is in ‘ideology’ for a reason). Deleuze and Guattari’s expressionism is in no way an idealism. It is an ontogenetic process philosophy: a philosophy of the event concerned directly with becoming.

Still, the ‘production of subjectivity’ is a central preoccupation of Guattari’s work in particular, and within his corpus most particularly of *Chaosmosis* (1995). By ‘production of subjectivity’ Guattari does not only mean the actual subjects that emerge in the ontogenetic net articulating content and expression, determining their potential. He also means that the movement of expression is itself subjective, in the sense that it is self-moving and has determinate effects. It is an agency, only without an agent: a subjectless subjectivity.<sup>14</sup> The ‘production of subjectivity’ is also the self-production of expression’s momentum.

There is nothing mystical in this notion. It is entirely natural (or: it is as natural as it is cultural). Nietzsche used the example of lightning to make the same point about the error of hypostasis, associating it as do Deleuze and Guattari with the propositional logic that necessarily attributes expression to a subject:

It is ... only owing to the seduction of language (and of the fundamental errors of reason that are petrified in it) which conceives and misconceives all effects as conditioned by something that causes effects, by a ‘subject’ ... the popular mind separates lightning from its flash and takes the latter for an *action*, for the operation of a subject called lightning ... as if there were a neutral substratum behind [it] ... But there is no such substratum; there is no ‘being’ behind doing, effecting, becoming ... the deed is everything.

(Nietzsche, 1967: 45)

The event is everything. There is no subject before or behind it whose deed it would be. It is an autonomous doing. Before the flash there is only potential, in a continuum of intensity: a *field* of charged particles. The triggering of the charge is a movement immanent to the field of potential, by which it plays out the consequences of its own intensity. The movement involves the field in its entirety. It is non-local, belonging directly to the dynamic relation *between* a myriad of charged particles. The flash of lightning expresses this non-local relation. Expression is always fundamentally of a *relation*, not a subject. In the expression, process and product are one. But this is a different process-product unity than the tracing kind. It is the unmediated unity of a processual immanence, involving neither external resemblance nor structural homology.<sup>15</sup> The lightning strike doesn’t resemble, represent, or reproduce the charged field. It

doesn't conform or correspond to it. It culminates it, in a playing out or performing of its intensity. Only with the culmination will the field have effectively been what it was: the conditions for lightning. The field of potential will have been determined. The deed is definitive. There is no going back on a strike of lightning. The doing of the deed says it all. It is its everything.

And more. On top of everything, the flash can *also* be captured. All is not yet done and culminated if, for example, the movement is caught by a human eye. Having passed into that perception, the flash is a product separate from its process. It has passed from an autonomous expression into the content of a body and a life. Its now perceptual intensity (immanent to the neuronal field of potential of the brain) may seed, for example, a myth.<sup>16</sup> The event of the flash may be prolonged, becoming a content for a mythic form of expression. Zeus, for example, emerges to take the credit. A creator now owns the deed. A subject has been added to the expression, a doer to the deed. The energies creative of the flash have extended into myth creation: from physical ontogenesis to mythopoiesis. Once the heroic subject has emerged to claim his object, a 'tracing' relation may be established between the two substantives. Zeus is 'like' the lightning. He is as decisive and unforgiving as his thunderbolt. They share properties. They conform and they correspond. Properties: the flash has gone from the expressive to the possessive. The products of the creative process now seem to contain its intensity in their mutual reflection. They jointly own it, as if they contained the principle of their reciprocal formation in their own likeness. This is the derivative level of symmetrical process-product unity associated with the propositional model. When subject-Zeus next throws his object-thunderbolt, he expresses something other than that deed: he expresses his anger. The flash is now a proposition: a manifestation of his mood. The resemblance to lightning has passed from whole to part, from the god to his emotion. Expression is now more narcissistic than ontogenetic: all it can do is spin off further resemblances (in accordance with a rhetorical structure, in this case through a synecdoche).

All that expression is not, it has become. Creative to the last: so generously creative is expression that it agrees to its own conversion. It allows its process to be prolonged into a qualitatively different mode of operation. It flows into rhetorical captivity, possession by a form of content and a form of expression in narcissistic reflection. There is little use in critiquing this 'annulment' of expression in a perceptual separation of its product from its process.<sup>17</sup> In one way or another, expression always self-converts upon reaching perception. This is its way, and it is the way of perception: both are predicated on the independence of the product from the autonomy of the process. What expression loses in ontogenetic vivacity, it gains in longevity. The flash doesn't disappear into the black of night. It continues. Its pick-up by a different process is the price of its continuing. Its culmination, the effect of its playing out (in this case a strikingly optical effect), feeds forward into another productive process for which it provides a content. In this example, the process that

picked up the flash and converted it from an autonomous form of expression into a form of content is creative in its own way: of myth. The capture of the content in ‘narcissistic’ rhetorical structure culminates the mythopoetic process. This second culmination, in the anti-flash of manifested resemblance, is also in fact productive, in a weak (homologous) way. It produces rhetorical figures. These readily form relays among themselves which settle into conventional circuits of association (structural propositions) constituting a self-reproducing system (for example, an oral or literary tradition). The violence of the flash has been domesticated to serve the functioning of a system operating according to its own rules of formation, at a certain level of reality. Lightning’s capture has contributed to the addition of an organizational level to the world. The initial ontogenesis, its continuation in mythopoiesis, and its second coming to an end in rhetorical poiesis are interlocking ‘strata’ of expression. Expression’s impulse travels through the chain, creatively changing forms along the way, passing between content and expression as it crosses the gaps between the strata.

Deleuze and Guattari’s ethics favours *affirming* expression, across all its meanderings, up to and including its annulment. Ethics is not about applying a critical judgement to expression’s product. It is about evaluating where its processual self-conversions lead. The basic question is: does process continue across its capture? Is the crossing of the gaps, the transformative feed-forward between strata, drift enough to keep it creative? Or has it really reached the end of the stream? Has it entered an oxbow of stagnant resemblances where it can do no more than eddy in its own likeness, producing self-reflective homologies? Has its ontogenesis ceased to be a *heterogenesis* to become, systematically, a reproduction? Does the success of the system’s self-reproduction create such a logjam that it backs up the flow of expression, spreading stagnation along its entire course, preventing still-striking autonomies of expression from making perceptual waves?

The next question is: can the logjam break? How can the stratified system be deterritorialized – made to pass into an ‘intermediate state’ between its established contents and their ordered expressions so that it crosses back over into a zone of systemic indeterminacy, re-tingeing with chance? How can expression rejoin a continuum of potential? How can its self-conversion to reproduction be reconverted to emergence? Can it reintensify? This is the entirely *pragmatic* question of how to perform an atypical expression capable of diverting the process into rebecoming. Emitting what experimental ‘particles’ of expression will recharge the creative field? Can the ontogenetic force be regained, out the far end of the strata, in flashes of language and gesture?<sup>18</sup>

### Sense and singularity

What Deleuze called the propositional model of language was characterized earlier as a three-sleeved straight-jacket on expression’s movement: designation,

manifestation, and signification; the particular, the personal, and the general. What every propositional system puts the squeeze on is the *singular*.

An approximation of the concept of the singular can be arrived at simply by considering a state of things not as a member of a class, or a particular instance of an existing type but (as was just done in the preceding example) as an occurrence.<sup>19</sup> An occurrence always presents chance-inflected variations, ‘accidents’ not exhibited by other occurrences with which a propositional system might be tempted to group it according to its order of resemblances. Confronted with these ungroupable aspects, the system can only apprehend them negatively, as anomalies. As anomalies, they can be systematically brushed aside as insignificant. The atypicalities slip out of signification’s sleeves.

This asigned fall-out, however, is precisely what made the occurrence what it was: an event. Not just an event: *this* event. *This* event is its own everything, its own happening, a singularity. The singular is not reducible to a particular thing or state of things belonging, according to a logic of resemblance, to a general type. It is not defined by what it shares with others of a kind. It is a self-defining field. It belongs only to its own field conditions of anomaly.

The singular is exactly as it happens. Other events may follow. Its happening may prove to have been the first in a series of occurrences carrying what may well be considered, under systematic comparison, the ‘same’ accidents. These cease retrospectively to be anomalies, becoming identifiable traits. On the basis of the shared properties lately assigned to them, the series of occurrences can now be grouped together as belonging to a type: a new type (a new form of content for the propositional system’s forms of expression). The event has passed from the status of a singularity to that of a particular instance of a general type: a member of a collection. Propositional systems are type-casting collector mechanisms.

Paradoxically, this means that with the singular appears the potential of a collection to come. Another way of putting it would be to say that the singular includes a *prospective* generality. Something that has an eventful prospective on generality – but on which generality has as yet no comprehending perspective – is ‘exemplary’. Earlier, the atypical expression was characterized as a ‘recursive futurity’. It was recursive in that its coming to pass enveloped a series of prior events, in an intense revisiting of the movement leading to its own emergence, from a last to a next-to-last, back up the chain of expression. Now it can be seen that the atypical expression is doubly intense. It also prospectively envelops a series.<sup>20</sup>

Deleuze and Guattari use the exemplary nature of singular expression to argue that even the most ostensibly personal expression may be directly political, in that it envelops a potential collective. For example, the subject of literary expression, to the extent that it is effectively creative, is not the individual author but a ‘people to come’ (1987: 345).<sup>21</sup> The atypical expression emits the potential for an unlimited series of further (collective) expressions

by individuals who will retrospectively be assigned by a propositional system of capture to membership in a group (psychosocial type, class, ethnicity, nation). An order of allowable designations, manifestations, and significations will settle around their type-casting. A complementary order of conventional performative expressions will help manage this new form of content. The force of collective, expressive emergence will be streamed into stratified functions of power. Unless: the collectivity in the making resists pick-up by an established stratum, insisting on defining its own traits, in a self-capture of its own anomaly. In this case, they will retain a shade of the unclassifiable and a margin of unpredictability in the eyes (or net) of existing systems of reference, no matter how hard those systems try fully to contain them. The collection will appear as what it is, a multiplicity in flux, an expressive 'movement' or 'orientation' still under formation (especially if the collective learns to creatively shed its traits as confidently as it cultivates them).

In Guattari's terminology, the atypical expression is a 'nucleus of expression' that may evade capture long enough to continue its autonomous formation as a 'node' of self-creative or 'autopoietic' subjectification.<sup>22</sup> It is because the subject of a singular expression continues under formation, still yet-to-come, that its autopoiesis must be considered a 'subjectless' subjectivity. Shy of its definitive capture at the reproductive end of its stream, it is a process without a fully determinate agent or product (an open-ended *subjectification*).<sup>23</sup>

That the singular event belongs only to its own conditions of anomaly means that it is prior to and independent of the conditions of truth or falsehood that will be assigned to its unfolding once its collective has come (to an end). Deleuze links the concept of the people to come, the collective of expression still in throes of continuing formation, to the creative 'powers of the false'. Given the distinction he often makes between the generative nature of force on the one hand and power as containment on the other, and his statement cited above about the opposite of the truth, it might actually be better to call it a productive 'force of absurdity'.<sup>24</sup>

The singular's conditions of anomaly are counter-conditions of absurdity, but in an entirely different way than the postmodern. They are absurd not because they produce an *excess* of signification, but because what they produce is, as potential, *in excess* of it.<sup>25</sup> As it happens, the exemplary expression signifies nothing. Which is not to say it expresses nothing. It expresses, in and as its own event, even before any eventual capture or continuation, the field conditions that gave rise to it and the collective potential its occurrence envelops. This doubly intense 'absurdity' of ontogenetic conditioning and unrealized potential, wrapped anomalously in *this* event, is what, on broadest general level of his theories of expression, Deleuze calls *sense* (Hjelmslev's 'purport' as the net is just being cast but before it has closed definitively on its prey). Deleuze's logic of seriality and potential is what allows him to make sense of asignifying expression. In turn, it is the idea of asignifying expression that

allows him to argue that speech and gesture can be literally (or is it literarily?) creative: ontogenetic; adding to reality.

It is important not to think of the creativity of expression as if it brought something into being from nothing. There is no *tabula rasa* of expression. It always takes place in a cluttered world. Its field of emergence is strewn with the after-effects of events past, already-formed subjects and objects and the two-pronged systems of capture (of content and expression, bodies and words) regulating their interaction: nets aplenty. In order to potentialize a new type, the atypical expression must evade these already established articulations. It must extract itself from captures ready and waiting, falling for an instant through the propositional mesh. 'Extracted from the proposition, sense is independent of it, since it suspends the proposition's affirmation and negation' (Deleuze, 1990: 32). It has entered the gap, the deterritorialized in-between of strata: the absurdity of the excluded middle. We may add propositional logics obeying the law of the excluded middle to the list of things expression is not fundamentally (but often and inevitably becomes): information, communication, ideology, rhetoric, postmodern slippage.

The evasive in-betweenness of expression's emerging into and continuing through a cluttered world is why it is never 'autonomous' in the sense of being a separate entity. Only a *process* is autonomous. A process is by nature relational, from its first strike to its recharging for more. The only autonomy is of unfolding relation. A corollary to this principle is: only an autonomy can be captured.

### Like a thought

The continuing of expression across experiences means that it is too big to fit the contours of an individual human body. Its moving-through envelops the sky-like immensity of its field conditions of emergence, and the numberless collectivity of a people to come. But in order to move through, it must move in. If expression's charge of potential were not incarnated in an individual body capable of renewing it, it would cease to be expressed. It would dissipate, unperceived, like the lightning flash you just missed seeing. Expression's culmination effects consent to perceptual pick-up by the human body. Not only, of course: non-human expression, including captures effected by other organisms, and even non-organic formations, are a recurring concern of Deleuze and Guattari.<sup>26</sup> There are any number of non-human strata in the world, with their own 'perceptual' mechanisms: means for picking up a charge of potential aflow in the world and capturing it in a stratum-forming self-production or reproduction. Many of these non-human formations are in fact integrated in the human body. A ray of light passing into the human eye strikes on the level of physics. Its impulse passes through many an interlocking level, from the physical to the chemical to the biological. On each level, it produces a dedicated effect that is captured as a content, and around which