

**Introduction**  
**LIKE A THOUGHT**

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from *A Shock to Thought: Expression After Deleuze and Guattari* (London: Routledge, 2002)

*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<sup>i</sup>

“THE WORLD DOES NOT EXIST OUTSIDE OF ITS EXPRESSIONS”<sup>ii</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 of the same 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, postmodern, 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>iii</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.” 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.” (ATP 86, 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

molding 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 circuitious 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>iv</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 molded conformity, into a trustworthiness of the subjective expression. Molded, mirroring, expression faithfully conveys content: represents 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’s 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*, 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>v</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” (14-15).

The willful 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>vi</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>vii</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>viii</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. First, it links the workings of language to a problematic of power, insisting on the intrinsic connection between language and extra-linguistic forces. Second, it 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, a subject-object polarity. The question is displaced onto what governs their dialectic: how the two come together, or what mediates their interaction. Mediation steals center 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 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 (and this may be considered a third advantage to the ideological approach) the initial emphasis has shifted from form, as mirrored or moulded, to *formation*. And it has done so (fourthly) 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 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.”<sup>ix</sup>

#### 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*). (ATP 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 “deterritorialization.” This blurring of the boundaries is *in addition to* their formal distinction.

In dialogue with Michel Foucault, they use the example of the prison. (ATP 66-67) 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’ body 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*, 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 foregone conclusion. Which content elements would make the migration? How they would 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 asearch 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.” (ATP 44). The system of established articulations passes into a mutational gap-state, filled with shed functions fallen free from their former implantations.<sup>x</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 “asignifying 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 asignifying 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."<sup>xi</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 favor the term arbitrary. It has too wan a logical a 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." (ATP 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. Neither is rooted in an individual body. It is not even in a particular institution, because it is the precisely the institutional system that is in flux. Expression is abroad in the world - where the potential is for what may become. It is nonlocal, 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.” (ATP 316)

It was a moral precept of a certain era that one must “own” one’s enunciative position. A moral 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 cannot finally 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.” (ATP 76- 77). Expression is always on the move, always engrossed in its own course, overflowing 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.” (ATP 317) Expression is captured in passing by its auto-objectifications, but only ever provisionally. In C.S.

Peirces'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>xii</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." (*ATP* 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 endeavor. It is also an ethical endeavor, 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>xiii</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. (ATP 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 functionless 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 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>xiv</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 nonverbal expression. More challengingly, it could address the hinge between nonverbal 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 might 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 assignifying violence can wrack the body and risk the life lending themselves to the process: a danger named Artaud. “He danced his did.”<sup>xv</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*. 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>xvi</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.<sup>xvii</sup>

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 nonlocal, belonging directly to the dynamic relation *between* a myriad of charged particles. The flash of lightning expresses this nonlocal 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>xviii</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>xix</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 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>xx</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 mythopoeic 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 favors *affirming* expression, across all its meanderings, up to and including its annulment. Ethics is not about applying a critical judgment 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 a 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 and their ordered expressions so that it crosses back over into a zone of systemic indeterminacy, re-tinging 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>xxi</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>xxii</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 atypicalites 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>xxiii</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.” (ATP 345)<sup>xxiv</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>xxv</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>xxvi</sup>

That the singular event belongs only to its own conditions of anomaly means that 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>xxvii</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>xxviii</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 aftereffects 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."<sup>xxix</sup> 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: nonhuman expression, including captures effected by other organisms, and even nonorganic formations, are a recurring concern of Deleuze and Guattari.<sup>xxx</sup> There are any number of nonhuman 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 nonhuman formations are in fact integrated in the human body. A ray of light passing into the human eye strikes on the level of the 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 certain functions alimentering the self-regulating system will come to revolve. The cascading generation of alimentary effect and functional

capture continues across the gaps between bodily strata. When it reaches the brain, the whole series repotentializes. Brain functioning serves as a hinge between the internal stratifications contained by the skin and the wider systems of capture into which the human organism as a whole is in turn integrated.

Deleuze, following Leibniz, considers every step along the chain a “perception.” Before reaches the “molar” level where it can be experienced as a conscious memory, thought, or sensation belonging to the life of the organism as a whole, it has already been these partially. It has been a crowd of stratum-specific “molecular” or “micro” perceptions. Each stratum has its own rules of content formation to feed its level-specific functioning, as well as unique forms of expression to transmit the generative impulse to other levels. Each stratum has its own self-generating mode of activity and effectivity: each is a mini-subjectivity. Or to use the term Guattari designed to foreground the autonomously relational nature of the interlocking strata, each is a “part-subject.” The micro-perceptions occupying the rungs of this step-ladder of self-generation are and remain nonconscious. Their content is stratum-specific, and cannot be passed on as such. Only an aggregate effect of their busy populating of the body is transmitted. This cumulative crowd-effect is vague, but upon impact on each level it catalyzes a self-organizing of that stratum.<sup>xxx</sup> Effective but lacking content, the “transmission” is not a communication. It is a “transduction”: a self-propagating movement seeding serial self-organizations, each differing in nature from the last but connected by a shared generative impulse.<sup>xxxii</sup>

Expression’s moving-through is nonconsciously inflected in the body by a cascade of repeated determinations, no sooner followed by passings into the gaps of systemic indeterminacy between its strata. The body’s layered processing injects as much chance inflection as it does serial definition, branding the cumulative effect of any entering impulse with a productive margin of unpredictability. The brain thrives on it.

Creative uncertainty, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is in fact the brain's chief product. It is a specialized organ for producing functionless functions alimending expressive experimentation. The brain, claimed Henri Bergson, is *the* organ of intensity, enveloping self-magnifying potential in its convoluted folds. Its operation, Deleuze and Guattari suggest, is "a bit like tuning a television screen whose intensities bring out that which escapes the power of objective definition."<sup>xxxiii</sup> The brain itself is a subjectless subjectivity - all the better to relay with other autonomies of expression (in relation to which the human organism itself will be in operational continuity as a part-subject). "From the cosmological to the microscopic, but also from the microscopic to the macroscopic."<sup>xxxiv</sup> That was the story of the lightning, from the sky, in the eye, through myth to literary tradition: in a nature-culture continuum (the field of emergence that is the world).<sup>xxxv</sup>

If expression were not incarnated in the human body in a way that doesn't just passively receive but actively repotentializes its moving-through, it would come to a stand-still on the retina. The human problem is that the charge of potential its perceptual apparatuses take in, to say nothing of the cerebral intensity they add, is too big to be contained in the body. Expression's passing through the body envelops, prospectively and retrospectively, levels cosmological and macroscopic. If the expressive momentum hits the body with its full ontogenetic force, it produces a compression shock. To convey the expressive potential "faithfully" (with sufficient, creative absurdity) the body must transmit the reality of the shock. It's a torture, a multi-level, interlocking, self-magnifying torture.<sup>xxxvi</sup> The body is wracked. A tarantella of atypical expression pours forth, deforming. Its outpouring relays the torture to the conventional forms of content and expression with which or to which the body is expected to speak and gesture. The body has become an expressive event: a voluble singularity.

The calming alternative is to brush off the impulse as a mere anomaly. It all depends on which nervous system is hit: whether it can live with expressive turbulence, or has learned to divert it into placid ox-bows of complacency. Habit is the body's defence against shocks of expression. It "recognizes" every arriving perception it can as being "like" an impulse the body has already integrated as a functional life content. It contains potential with resemblance. Any number of singular bodily events will automatically be grouped together, soliciting the same type of response. The resemblance is in this redundancy of response: it is in on the level of the event's effect. In other words, it is a produced resemblance - of the body's elicited actions to each other - rather than a formal likeness between the "stimulus" and the response.<sup>xxxvii</sup> The sameness of the response depends precisely on disregarding the singular contours of the arriving impulse: dismissing its potentially torturous anomalies as functionally insignificant.

Deleuze writes that a body does not choose to think, and that the supreme operation of thought does not consist in making a choice. A body is "forced to think" by its implication in a self-propagating, serially self-organizing generative movement.<sup>xxxviii</sup> Thought strikes like lightning, with sheering ontogenetic force. It is *felt*. The highest operation of thought is not to choose, but to harbor and convey that force, repotentialized. The thinking is not contained in the designations, manifestations, and significations of language, as owned by a subject. These are only partial expressions of it: pale reflections of its flash. The thinking is all along the line. It *is* the process: its own event. To think along the line, conveying and magnifying its creative momentum, does not involve a mastery of it. To the contrary, it involves submitting to it, consenting to participate in it, letting its self-propagating movement pass through, transducing it. The tarantella of thought is a mimicry of that *event*, not a mirroring or moulding of expression to content. There is nothing, actually, in thought as such with which to conform or correspond. It only has force to *deform* to.

Thinking is of potential. The wrackings of the thinking body mimic the excess of potential it hosts. The mimickry is not of any form, but of the process of formation itself, its actual products aside. It is a performance of the ontogenetic force of the process as such. That forced movement overflows the particular body. It overflows its generality as well, its assigned class or type - the “subject-position” from which it conventionally speaks and acts - continuing uncertainly, violently across anything we might habitually construe as personal experience, evading definitive capture in already established forms of content and expression. The body’s mimickry of the event makes it a lived “analogy” of it, not in the sense that it in any way resembles it, but in the sense that it really (not truly) repeats its operations (of transformation). To live “like” a thought: in *operative* identity with emergent expression. Thought does not reflect the real. It *is* real. It has a reality on a par with the world’s becoming.<sup>xxxix</sup>

#### A GENESIS OF THE DEFINITE

Artaud was right: expression “says too much to be born, and says too much in being born.” Its expressive momentum carries a charge of potential too great to be absorbed in any particular thing or event: too much to be born(e). It for this very reason that it has to take body: so as to continue, generating a more to reality to absorb the excess. What absorbs the excess of potential are the determinate functionings of the host body. These actualize the potential in determinate forms of content and expression. That actual definition says too much in being born: it annuls the potential, bringing a current of expression to the end of the stream. So the movement must begin. Its determinate products must pass again into an intermediate state where they are repotentialized. Expression regains momentum, cascading through the body’s many levels, like a contagion. If the result is an exemplary expression convoking of a collectivity, the contagion will spread.

Expression will take another body. Across an indefinite series of such incarnations, it will not only have taken bodies, it will have taken on a life of its own. What each host body receives in return for its service to expression is a quantum of that vivacity: a quantum of potential to feed into its own growth and functioning. What expression spreads when it says too much to be born and not enough in being born, are forces of existence. It disseminates life. It comes to be determined, and exceeds its determinations to become.

The theory of expression, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is not concerned with the communication of information but with the genesis of the definite.<sup>xl</sup> It should be sufficiently clear by now that the emphasis is on the genesis: its continuing across defining events. Determination is a necessary concept for the theory of expression: its problem is how determinate beings, or being-determinate, serially emerges. What makes it a theory of change was announced at the beginning: the insistence that what emerges does not conform or correspond to anything outside it, nor to its own conditions of emergence. A determination of being is not a tracing. Determination is a differing. Emergence is always of the different: every genesis a heterogenesis. A thing's form does not reflect its formation. It inflects it.

Conditions of emergence are an existential opening for determinations to come. This means that their mode of reality follows a different logic from that of the constituted beings to which it gives rise, with their reproductions and closed operational loops. If Deleuze and Guattari's theories of expression are an ontology, it is of a very special kind: what Deleuze calls a "superior" or "transcendental empiricism."<sup>xli</sup> A transcendental empiricism takes it to heart that formation and form, the emerging and the emerged, pertain to different modes of reality, even if they both belong to the same reality (there being only one world).<sup>xlii</sup> It is an "empiricism" in that it is experimental and pragmatic. It is an expanded empiricism, in fact, in that it accepts the reality of the potential from which determinate being

arises. Potential, it says, is no mere “possibility.” Traditionally in philosophy, it is said that there is no difference between a determinate being and its possibility, other than existence. In other words, if you bracket the thing’s being its idea remains the same. Its ceasing-to-be subtracts nothing from its concept. There is no real difference. Between potential and being determinate, on the other hand, there is all the difference in the world: coming to be. Ultimately, what is bracketted by possibility is becoming. The actual existence of the thing is irrelevant because whether it happens to exist or not there is still a correspondence between the content of the idea that may be had of it, and the form it would have were it to be. Possibility is the tracing power of thought to mirror things formally while bracketting their reality. Deleuze and Guattari do not wish to bracket reality in thought. They want to open bodies to the reality *of* thought. This requires operating in the element of potential.

The empiricism of their theories of expression is “transcendental” by virtue of the transitivity and excess that come with potential. Potential carries too high a charge of reality not to be reborn and take another body: not to go beyond any determinate incarnation of it. The conditioning of emergence that is potential, is a “lived transcendental.” Its always going beyond is not into a separate reality any more than it is a lack of reality. It is an always-more *in* this reality. Its going-beyond is a moving-in: a movement of immanence. This immanence of the transcendental, this always more to lived reality, may be summed up as: the inclusion of conditions for new emergence in the world that determinately emerges, and reciprocally the inclusion of the determinately emerged in the field conditions for new emergence. Potential rolls in to roll on, in an experiential openness of clutter and invention.

That openness, once again, is an autonomy of relation. The idea suggested earlier that the event of the singular is “accidental” needs to be reappraised in light of this. What makes a singularity unique - fully and only its own event - is an accident

only from the perspective of the already-operating type-casting collector mechanisms to which it gives pause. What is accidental is *their* momentary failure to recognize. The accident is their negative observation that the event does not immediately provide more grist for their alimentary operations: more substance for their established forms of content. From the point of view of emergence, on the other hand, the “accidents” are a necessity. They are precisely what make the event an expression of potential. They are its openness to being otherwise; to becoming. “Relation is not an accident vis à vis a substance, it is a structuring, energetic, and constitutive condition that extends into the existence of constituted beings.”<sup>xliii</sup> Determinate being is an extended expression of its constitutive conditions. A transcendental empiricism recognizes “accidents” of birth as an extending, expressive necessity. It is every being’s exemplary fate to be born a singularity, for more to come.

PLEASE CONTINUE

The essays presented in this book deal with a wide range of subject matter. They are not organized around a common theme. What brings them together is a willingness to process the shock of Deleuze and Guattari’s transcendental empiricism. Most of the essays include relatively little direct commentary upon Deleuze and Guattari’s work. They are extensions of it, more than reflections on it. In this, they are faithful: in their refusal to take Deleuze and Guattari’s thought as a model to conform or correspond to. Although it is not always reflected their current affiliations, a large majority of the authors in this volume have worked from a base in Canada or Australia. The reception of Deleuze and Guattari’s work occurred in those countries under local conditions lending themselves (perhaps more easily than was elsewhere the case) to the perception that its refusal to communicate, judge correctness, and moralize was not an abdication but an ethics and that the ethics was also and immediately an aesthetics. That this volume should reflect this particular



geographical clustering is, of course, no accident. I have had the benefit of living and working under both sets of local conditions - a “fate” for which I am more than editorially grateful.

The preceding introductory essay does not presume to explain or represent the essays in the volume. Its relation to them is purposely tangential. The introduction follows its own itinerary, taking a pass at many of the preoccupations that the reader will encounter again in the essays, approached in them from different and original angles. It is hoped that the (undoubtedly idiosyncratic) linking of the concepts in the introduction will not constrain the reading of the essays, but instead will suggest to readers the potential for making their own “transversal” links between them: creative relays across the diversity of the essays’ subject matter and the originality of their approaches. The point was not to pre-form, but to invite more of the different, along “analogous” lines. Please continue.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book first took shape as a special issue of the *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* (volume 24, no. 3, September 1997). I would like to thank the editors and administrators of that journal for their invitation to guest edit and their expert follow-through. I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Shane Wilcox, whose industry, expertise, and attention to detail as my research assistant benefited the project incalculably. The work of editing the journal issue and refashioning it as a book was carried out under grants from the Australian Research Council and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. My research activities in Australia were hosted by the English Department of the University of Queensland and the Humanities Research Centre of the Australian National University. Andrew Murphie kindly contributed the idea for the book title. Finally, I would like to thank my editor at Routledge, Tony Bruce, and his assistant Zoe Drayson, for gently ushering the book into existence.

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#### <sup>i</sup> NOTES

. Antonin Artaud, “Dix ans que le langage est parti,” quoted in Stephen Barber, *The Screaming Body* (New York: Creation Books, 1999), 88.

ii Gilles Deleuze, *Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 132.

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- iii Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 147. For Deleuze and Guattari's dismissal of communicational and informational models, see *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 75-85. In subsequent references, this volume will be cited by the abbreviation *ATP*.
- iv See for example, Félix Guattari, "The Postmodern Impasse," *The Guattari Reader*, ed. Gary Genosko (London: Blackwell, 1996), 109-113.
- v Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 14. In the English translation, *désignation* is rendered as "denotation."
- vi For a nostalgia-less, Deleuze-Guattari inflected appropriation of the notion of "simulation" for inter-cultural politics, see **Mani Haghighi** in this volume.
- vii "Irony ... determines ... the whole of the possible as a supreme originary individuality ... [it] acts as the instance which assures the coextensive of being and of the individual within the world of representation ... [rendering] possible the ascent of the individual," *Logic of Sense* 138.
- viii The current of postmodernism following from Baudrillard was perhaps given its most surrealist-absurd formulation in the work of Arthur and Marilouise Kroker. Seriously absurd currents pivot on the later work of François Lyotard on Kant. The sublime is absurd by Kantian definition. As a "concept without an intuition" to ground it, it carries an empty excess of signification (like Lévi-Strauss's *mana*, the sublime object of anthropology). For an alternative to the postmodern sublime centring instead on the analytic of the beautiful, see **Melissa McMahon**, **Steven Shaviro**, and **Stephen Zagala** in this volume.
- ix Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Seán Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 87.
- x For a sustained discussion of how content and expression can be made to pass into intermediate states that fuse them into mutational "matters of expression" see Deleuze, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), chapter 1, "Content and Expression," 3-8.
- xi Louis Hjelmslev, *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*, trans. Francis J. Whitfield (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), p. 52. Cited in "Guattari's Schizoanalytic Semiotics: Mixing Hjelmslev and Peirce," Gary Genosko, *Deleuze and Guattari: Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers*, vol. 3, ed. Gary Genosko (London/New York: Routledge, 2001), 916.
- xii On "probe-heads" or "cutting edges of deterritorialization," see *ATP*, 189-191.
- xiii Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis (Sydney/Indianapolis: Power Publications/University of Indiana Press, 1995). On the shift in Guattari's thinking to an aesthetic paradigm, see **Félix Guattari** in this volume. **Stephen Zagala** also develops an ethico-aesthetics in his contribution. **Thomas Lamarre** analyzes the streaming of the world as expression, through bodily fostering sensation, into the brush-stroke of the Japanese calligrapher.

xiv There is a tension in Deleuze and Guattari's work over the relation between potential and virtuality. They are often treated synonymously, especially in passages where the influence of Gilbert Simondon's energeticism is evident. Elsewhere, where the influence of Bergson's concept of "pure memory" is predominant, the virtual is treated as nondynamic or anenergetic (a "sterile" double of the actual in the vocabulary of *Logic of Sense*). These tensions are not necessarily contradictions. The nondynamic treatment of the virtual imposes itself where it is a question of the differential mode of reality of the virtual in itself. Potential comes in where it is a question of the differentiating passage of the virtual into actuality (emergence). It may be productive to think of potential as the transition state between the virtual and the actual, logically distinct from both. For more on these issues see Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham: Duke University Press, forthcoming). **Andrew Murphie**, in this volume, offers a detailed analysis of the relation between the virtual and expression.

xv This is an example of Deleuze and Guattari's of an atypical expression, drawn from e.e. cummings, *ATP* 99. On the tarantella as a zone of dynamic indistinction effecting a becoming between established forms-contents, see *ATP* 305. On the "schizophrenic" ability of words and things or bodies to cross over into each other, see Deleuze's analyses of Lewis Carroll and Louis Wolfson in *Logic of Sense* 82-93. See also the appendix to *Logic of Sense* on "Klossowski or Bodies-Languages," 280-300. In *Francis Bacon. Logique de la sensation* (Paris: Ed. de la Différence, 1981), Deleuze's analyzes the deformational force of expression. On the cry of expression, see the discussion of Bacon's scream portraits in the same volume, as well as Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 6 and *Logic of Sense* 89-90 (the schizophrenic "howl"). On Artaud and the "cruelty" of expression, see **Catherine Dale** in this volume.

xvi On cognition, the brain, and subjectless subjectivity (a concept drawn from the work of Raymond Ruyer), see **Paul Bains** in this volume.

xvii Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1967), 45.

xviii On the "primary process" as involving a certain product-process unity, see Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 7.

xix On perception, the brain, and the subject, see Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson (London: Verso, 1994), 208-212, where the brain is described as a "form in itself" or immanent "self-surveying" (autonomous) field of relation productive of events – flashes of thought. The immediate reference in this passage is again to the work of Raymond Ruyer and subjectless subjectivity.

xx On the perceptual "signal" as a "flash" simultaneously culminating the expression of difference and marking its cancelation in determinate being, see Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 222-223, 228.

xxi Rather than doing away with the notion of critique, Deleuze himself prefers to renew it and use it. He goes back to its Kantian sense of "the determination of the

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genetic elements that condition ... production." Deleuze turns Kant's meaning against him by construing the conditions in question as those productive of "real" rather than "possible" experience. See Daniel Smith's translator's introduction to *Essays Critical and Clinical* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), xxiv. The reconversion of a stratified system of expression into a "pre-individual" field of emergence is an instance of what Deleuze calls "counter-actualization" (*Logic of Sense* 150).

xxii This is using "singularity" in a sense closer to Deleuze and Guattari's usage in their later works (see Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, 7) than to the "singular points" of *Logic of Sense* or *Difference and Repetition* (these latter pertain less to dynamic potential on the edge of emergence, than to the differential nature of the virtual as such). For a treatment of the concept of singularity closer to the way it is used in *Logic of Sense* and *Difference and Repetition*, see **Alan Bourassa** in this volume.

xxiii Deleuze develops the serial logic of expression at length throughout *Logic of Sense*.

xxiv Also on the subject of expression as a "missing people" to be invented, see Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 4. What is being termed the "exemplary" here also figures in the work of Deleuze and Guattari in the guise of the "anomalous individual" serving as a pivot for a collective becoming. See *ATP* 243-248 and *Dialogues* 42.

xxv On autopoietic expression, approached from a Guattari-inflected Lacanian perspective, see **Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger** in this volume.

xxvi "Nucleus of expression," "node of subjectification," and "autopoiesis" feature in the vocabulary of Guattari's *Chaosmosis*. In his earlier vocabulary, the captured collective of expression is a "subjugated group" and the continuing collective expression is a "group-subject."

xxvii On the powers of the false, see Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 147-55 and *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 104-105. Actually, the ambiguity of calling them "powers" of the false does not occur in French. In French there are two terms for power. *Puissance* connotes potential, a "power to." *Pouvoir* connotes "power over." The "powers of the false" are *les puissances du faux*.

xxviii Deleuze's *Logic of Sense* approaches "sense" through paradox (rather than parody or irony). See in particular 74-81.

xxix Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 32.

xxx See in particular "The Geology of Morals," *ATP*, 39-74. On the human/non-human and expression, see **Gary Genosko** and **Alan Bourassa** in this volume.

xxxi On micro-perception and the distinctiveness of its "confused" expressive impact, see **Aden Evens** and **Andrew Murphie** in this volume.

xxxii The term “transduction” is borrowed by Deleuze and Guattari from Gilbert Simondon. They use it for the mode of operation of becoming. Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of deterritorialization is also in dialogue with Simondon’s concept of “dephasing.” An ontogenetic field, he argues, is dephased in the sense that it envelops the potential for what will in actuality separate out as separate temporal phases as well as distinct organizational strata. A transductive process crosses intervals of dephasing where it is repotentialized for a next emergence. See *L’individu et sa genèse physico-biologique*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Grenoble: Millon, 1995), 30-32.

xxxiii Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 209.

xxxiv Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 87.

xxxv In order to sustain a nature-culture continuum it seems necessary to posit “feed-back” mechanisms whereby the formed products specific to a stratum cascade back down the chain, retransforming into “functionless functions” contributing to conditioning the field of emergence for each stratum. In the absence of this recursive causality, the system of interlocking organizational levels risks becoming a hierarchical “chain of being” with human reason once again at the pinnacle. On this idea of a “feed-back of higher forms,” see Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*, introduction and chapters 1, 6, and 8.

xxxvi **Michael Hardt**, in this volume, writes of the “exposure” of the flesh to the violence of expressive incarnation.

xxxvii On habit, see *Difference and Repetition*, 70-79. Deleuze’s treatment of habit rightly emphasizes that it is not just a passive response to a stimulus, but is inventive in its own containing way: the resemblances are *produced* (by the repetition of the response, as spontaneously preserved by a self-organizing memory of the flesh). Unlike the ideological notion of habitus, Deleuze’s account of habit emphasizes that it belongs as much to the organic stratum, to the productive, physiological capacities of the flesh, as to cultural systems of reproduction.

xxxviii Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 138-140.

xxxix On the analogic reality of thought, see Simondon, *L’individu et sa genèse physico-biologique*, 263-268 and Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*. On mimicking the event, see *Logic of Sense* 150-151 and 178-179 (on the “actor-dancer”). In this volume, **José Gil** analyzes Merce Cunningham’s dance practice as a “mimesis” enjoining forces of deformation in order to compose, in the artistic event, a virtual body-double.

xl Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1990), 135.

xli Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 143-148. “The aim [of a transcendental empiricism] is not to rediscover the eternal or the universal, but to find the conditions under which something new is produced (*creativity*),” Deleuze in Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), preface to the English edition, vii.

xlii The “univocity” of being, in all its multiplicity (the “One-All”-ness of the world), is a major concern for Deleuze throughout his writing life. It is a particular concern of *Expressionism in Philosophy, Logic of Sense*, and *Difference and Repetition*: “arrive at the magic formula we seek – PLURALISM = MONISM,” *ATP* 20.

xliii Simondon, *L’individu*, 81.

