

TO AFFECT THEORY

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Readers of *Capacious* are probably more prone than most to field, on occasion, a deceptively difficult question. For those curious enough to ask it, the question must seem straightforward enough: “What is affect theory?” Over the last several years, really for almost a decade now, this is a question I’ve been posed more times than I can remember. Yet, somehow, every time, whatever answer I’ve managed to get out seems to elude satisfying me—and often, I fear, whoever’s looked to me for an answer. And that’s a curious predicament to face for someone, at least measured by much of what I publish and teach, who should probably know just how to respond to such questions. How can I write about and train students in affect theory without having a definitive answer about what it even is? The truth is, I think the *not* knowing of affect theory is part of the point, that is, part of why—and how—affect theory matters. The key question to ask isn’t what affect theory *is*, but what the doing of affect theory *does*.

There was a time, early on (from here in 2023, we’ll say the mid-1990s count), when a set of practices and questions grouped under the vague heading of something called “affect theory” was becoming a semi-stable enough interest among scholars to be visible across different academic disciplines and sites of inquiry. Mind you, these weren’t the earliest days—the ones that historical renderings anachronistically tend to evoke via Spinoza, Freud, or various other bellwethers who didn’t realize “affect theory” was what they were up to—but they were early enough in the conrescence of something resembling a veritable field that Brian Massumi, writing in 1995, could reasonably observe a sort of discursive wild-west in studying affect. “The problem,” he wrote then, “is that there is no cultural-theoretical vocabulary specific to affect. Our entire vocabulary has de-

rived from theories of signification that are still wedded to structure even across irreconcilable differences” (Massumi 1995, 88). In other words, right around the time that “affect” was becoming a more broadly legible area of interest in cultural theory, psychology, philosophy, communication, and otherwise, there was just no language—literally, there was no extant vocabulary—adequate to expressing the floating, liminal, asignifying, emergent yet elusive character of affects, at least not when understanding them in the now somewhat familiar way that distinguishes the noun called “affect” with the nouns called “feeling” or “emotion.”

Thankfully, that time has now passed. As *Capacious* and many other examples attest, we now do have a whole conceptual apparatus, with an attendant vocabulary, that makes it easier to talk about affect in a more or less shared way, or at least through an argot that many of us invested in the study would recognize. Of course, a specialized vocabulary—all the *intensities* and *forces*, the *bodies* and *becomings*—can’t solve the problem of representational language itself ultimately being inadequate to the task of capturing (in the sense of fully knowing or describing) the affectness of affect. Which is to say, representational language has a discouraging way of plowing through the undecidability of affect by reducing “it,” first to a thing, and then to a thing fixed enough to presume that it’s knowable and attached to a subject. But affect (and hence the question of what *affect theory* is) just isn’t compatible with being calcified into a semiotic system premised on the notion that signs have a stable-enough thing to signify.

There are many ways into this kind of thinking, and readers here may not need to have them rehearsed, but let’s look at one way of situating affect’s very importance in its extralinguistic nature. Consider the human infant. Before the child can speak, they are a bundle of affects. Slobbering, curling up, stretching as far as their chubby arms can reach without touching anything at all. Sometimes they cry, sometimes they *wail*, sometimes they dimple-smile-coo for no apparent reason while all witnesses melt and the electricity flickers like magic. Whether stone-faced or reactive, the infant communicates with a primal, embodied force. Eating, pooping, sleeping, eventually the caretakers learn the signs. There, that’s hunger: they’re chewing on their hand. That there’s constipation: their face is squeezed shut like a fist. Sleepy? Someone’s getting a bit cranky. Even when these embodied “signs” become readable to someone who has learned them, they’re still different from language in the common sense.

The infant has not yet come into language. Their body has things it needs to do, and it does them, the way the mother's body, in childbirth, took over from the mother, becoming a co-pilot with a yoke of its own. But the infant has much less control than a mother—most take months even just to crawl—and so what their bodies can and can't do is limited. There is, nevertheless, an evident *force* or *intensity* to the infant body's means of *becoming* satisfied through its relation with other bodies it encounters, from the nipple to the face to the blanky to the crib. These *forces*, *intensities*, *becomings* (notice our vocabulary words in action) are the things we might call "affects." And although the "affect" of these encounters doesn't quite belong to the infant, or to the crib, it emerges from encounters between them that impede or facilitate either's ability to act, *to be* infant, *to be* crib.¹

If all goes well, the infant grows up, learns to get around, learns to speak, thinks *in* language, and their ways of becoming *through* embodied affects begin to seem less apparent. The grown child learns to label desire *as* desire (and as *their* desire), moving in the process further away from the undifferentiated affect-bundle of infancy. A wedge, a space, a time, a separation, an articulable awareness, has now mediated the immediacy (though nothing's immediate) of the once-infant's sensory being in the world. And yet, in the same way that the infant's embodied affects both produced its becoming and were produced by the other bodies that diminished or increased what it could do (think: the caretakers, cribs, pacifiers, etc.), so too with the grown-up, only the body parts have changed. The embodied affects are still there. The language and reasoning, the rules, the schedules, the organizational structures, and so forth, simply come to obfuscate the continual happening of embodied affectivity as we get older.

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, building from Nietzsche but copping a phrase from an Artaud poem, have a name for this. They call something close to the undifferentiated affect-bundle a "body without organs" (2005, 149–166). The body without organs is a figure of thought for the potential of being an unregulated body, not so unlike the infant. Infants are a bundle of affects in part because they have not yet been regulated by—or subsumed into—the structures that encumber the free operation of their parts. And one of those structures, a very powerful one, is language. It accrues like a thin film over all our becoming, filtering our thoughts, our bodies, one's relation to oneself, but also to the not-me. This much is true for everyone: there's always a lot more not-me than me. Affect theory, in part, is a way of unencumbering that distinction. Affects are not merely personal. They are not merely other. They are in-between. More than me, less than we.

For anyone who has been around youngsters through the early phases of their becoming, the difference between an infant and the once-infant brought into language is pretty noticeable. It's not uncommon to hear parents, almost with an air of surprise, remark of their newly walking-talking toddlers that they're "like a little human." What this means isn't that the parents thought they'd birthed something else, but that the sorts of behaviors and movements through the world that they'd always associated with nearly every human they know are suddenly, as it were, identifiable in their own child. The earlier affect-bundle was hardly recognizable in this way. But with the settling of the film of language over our thoughts and physical encounters, a measure of autonomy, of decision-making, of articulable desire, invention, and self-awareness, all become more evident. These are among the wonderful gifts of language and animacy. And while humans aren't the only ones bearing these gifts, they have flourished in human people as a marvelous capacity that's enabled us brainy bipedals to create art and music and dance and story, all the secular miracles of human creation, let alone the many scientific and technological discoveries that have peeled back the sticker on the mysteries of the universe.

And yet, with the coming of these marvelous gifts, by coming *into* these gifts, the way some people might talk about "coming into some money," something's changed. The affect bundle that we all always seem to have become muted, suppressed, attenuated, you choose the metaphor. Symbolic language just operates in a different order than affect—less front/back than side/side—nevertheless giving the impression of its primacy, so that affect can seem, by comparison, to be backgrounded.² The idea isn't to draw a hard line between affect here, language there. It's to think-feel the ways each is inadequate to the other by acknowledging the sharedness of their force in the world, while at the same time ceding that language isn't the only culprit explaining the empirical challenge of pointing to affect—*there!*—as something stable and coherent.

For instance, we all accumulate pasts, and with them parts we remember, parts we don't, and parts we misremember or fabricate altogether. These ostensibly personal histories literally change our bodies in their constant dramas of becoming, from weight gain to epigenetic switches to the residues of generational trauma, and that's why *feelings* tend to be personal (where *affects* aren't), both because they're attached to environmental stimuli that may not impact someone else, and because our bodies feel through the medium of our own distinct body. Even if each

person's unique physiology—from your DNA to your central nervous system—is 99.9% the same as every other human's, no two bodies are *wholly* the same because we all have different encounters as we move through the world. Feelings may be essentially personal because everyone has singular embodied experiences that make them register in different ways. But the example of the infant born already having intense needs and allures reveals that there is another aspect of becoming that precedes language and perhaps memory itself. In any case, it's different from either. We call it affect.

If this all is beginning to read like a prelude to some grand philosophy of affect, it's not. I'm merely trying to spread out an example that illustrates a basic point. Affect is something other than language, other than personal. "It" is a consequential tug that draws relations toward their force, a force that may or may not prove salient, that may or may not have anything to do with "feelings" or "meaning" at all. Affect precedes language but doesn't go away when we come into language. And affects certainly aren't only human. In fact, they're not even human. Just because humans use language differently than animals and plants, doesn't mean animals and plants don't have communicative language or that they aren't rich with affectivity and prone to affectability. The extralinguistic character of affects means that, to a certain degree, they are like an autonomic system over which any animate individual being, human or otherwise, has little or no control. Affects beat like hearts, circulate like blood, turn like a plant toward the sun.

This leads to one of affect theory's more controversial claims: namely, that affects precede consciousness.³ If affect is preconscious, then it isn't something over which anyone can have ownership or control. Indeed, the very "it" of affect isn't. And if there is no consistent, knowable, and expressible "object" to point to as "an affect"—whereas that's not quite the case with a feeling or emotion—then it's harder to imagine a "subject" that could act upon "it." If affect is preconscious, in other words, it may also mean that nobody can mobilize or deploy affects for intentional, instrumental reasons. Affects are not the same as *pathos*, and though Aristotle surely tracked the rhetorical arts of using emotion as an influential mover of belief and action on others (2007), there yet remains an unruliness about the whole enterprise. With no "subject" of affects and no "affect" as object, it's harder for me to see how affect could be associated with intention, at least not without its most important *je ne sais quoi* being lost in translation.

Yet the preconscious happening of affectivity doesn't mean affects aren't impacted by language, or vice versa. Bodies are constantly interacting in ways that influence one another without that influence being identifiable except *after* it has already exerted its influential force (and even then, again, only imperfectly). After

all, as Massumi has said elsewhere, “No scientist has ever observed a force. Not even Newton saw gravity. Only force-effects are observable” (2002, 160). The same is true of affects: nobody has ever seen them, only their effects. Indeed, in one of their last interviews, Lauren Berlant takes the never-been-seen nature of affects further. “The thing about affect,” they say there, “is that there is no direct evidence of it: but there is no direct evidence of anything, as all processes require refraction in solidity-approximating forms” (2020, 248). That’s quite a statement from one of the more influential voices in affect theory. Not only is there no direct evidence that affect even exists; for Berlant, this simply isn’t a problem. Rather, they say, “This forces us to think about mediation” (2020, 248).

Well, so how is affect mediated? What “solidity-approximating forms” does affect take? *Many ways, many forms*. But one of its mediating forms, and one that’s prized in academic currency, is through language, bearing in mind that language, too, is nothing without the mediation of its delivery, whether in writing like what you’re reading now, in speech, hand-signs, smoke signals, or otherwise. Affect and language are adjacencies that share an alongsidedness dependent upon a medium—in a way, a middle—which also at least partly determines what they can be and do. This doesn’t mean language can fully “capture” or “represent” affect, any more than it means affect isn’t also implicated in the mediation of language. It means that a language adequate “to affect theory” would be akin to stammering. It would be, as Foucault writes in a different context, a kind of murmuring, a “language about the outside of all language, speech about the invisible side of words” (1987, 25).⁴ That’s because language and affect each create different, though sometimes entangled, force-effects that operationalize dynamic sets of relations in social and material worlds. Just because those of language tend to be more discernible does not make language and affect coterminous. It’s just that, by being adjacent to language, it ends up taking far more work to identify the effects of affects and find a vocabulary or method adequate to their extralinguistic (and, indeed, their infralinguistic) evanescence and complexity. Thinking-feeling the extra/infralinguistic happening of affect sure is an unpointed process.

The anthropologist Eduardo Kohn has done some interesting work on this front, and though he doesn’t articulate it with affect theory outright, I think his work can be read as a way to make sense of affect’s extralinguistic elusiveness. Kohn’s research on the animacy of upper Amazonian forests in Ecuador resonates almost uncannily with Massumi’s earlier claims about affect’s language problem—or,

rather, with the problem facing those of us who want to write about affect using representational language but keep getting hung up on the old structural snares. Not unlike Massumi, Kohn suggests that a “more expansive understanding of representation is hard to appreciate because our social theory—whether humanist or posthumanist, structuralist or poststructuralist—conflates representation with language” (2013, 8). His concern is that most operationalized theories of language, and most human language use in practice, adhere to anthropocentric assumptions that fail to imagine other representational processes beyond those prominent among humans. Kohn makes a compelling argument that a social theory premised upon Charles Sanders Peirce’s “weird” semiotics would be far more compatible with the many nonhuman, extralinguistic, and “nonsymbolic representational modalities [that] pervade the living world” (2013, 8). The trouble, though, Kohn suggests, is that human people continue to “conflate representation with language in the sense that we tend to think of how representation works in terms of our assumptions about how human language works” (8). What we ought to do instead, he argues, is acknowledge that “life is constitutively semiotic”—because neglecting to do so means that we will “fail to recognize that signs also exist well beyond the human (a fact that changes how we should think about human semiosis as well)” (2013, 9).

If the thread to affect theory is getting thin here, that’s because affect isn’t the thread Kohn is tugging. But it is ours, and so we might observe that the same problem Massumi noticed in 1995, about the lack of an adequate model of signification to theorize affect, is the one Kohn writes about (in considerably more detail) as foreclosing an openness to the communicative (and also *affective*) processes of nonhumans. Which is to say, although we may be getting closer to having operationalized what Massumi then called “the absence of an asignifying philosophy of affect” (1995, 88), our improving fluency in writing or talking about affect still cannot keep pace with the thinking-feeling of affect as something that may simply not be amenable to language, at least in the predominant representational modalities that Kohn identifies as anthropocentric.

How, if at all, does anthropocentrism figure into affect theory? The strong case might argue that, even just by using language as the means of our theorizing, we’ve already cordoned the realm of the affective into forms of reason and understanding delimited by a human perspective and semiotic system that is based upon anthropocentric givens. Because of that, in the strong case, all affect theory is born anthropocentric: it is biased toward privileging a “human affect theory,” whereby “human” falls off as the taken-for-granted signifier. I’m not too compelled by the strong case, even if it’s just hypothetical. But it’s not a strawman either. The real reason to dismiss it isn’t because it’s not true. Many languages,

English among them, do privilege subject-object distinctions, actors and the acted-upon, and the grammatical “middle voice” that has been lost. As John Durham Peters observes of the lost middle voice, a sentence such as, “*The meal is eating* sounds weird—precisely because the agency is off; it’s neither passive, with an unidentified agent, nor active, with an identified one” (2022, 2). We are accustomed to thinking and talking, on the one hand, in terms of someone or some thing who does something and, on the other, in terms of someone or some thing that has had something done to it or with it. A “more than me, less than we” approach to affect theory doesn’t play nice with this way of languaging affectivity. Abiding Berlant’s call for attending to mediation, the lost middle voice (in English, at least) may be the closest to an ideal available way to language affect, and to affect language. *The middle is affecting*.

To the extent that affects are in the middle, perhaps media studies—or, more specifically, *medium theory*, in the sense inherited from Marshall McLuhan—is another area that could help illuminate affect’s importance or find the language sufficient to its being in-between subject and object. There might then be an unacknowledged strain of doing affect that passes through Innis-McLuhan-Peters, rather than the other lineages that are already getting written into affect theory’s history.⁵ But to accept medium theory as a somewhat homologous kin of affect theory would, at the same time, involve stretching how we think about genealogies of inquiry and ideas in the first place. In the main, Innis, McLuhan, and Peters, among others who do this work, have not engaged much with theorizing “affect” outright. How could they be doing affect theory? Yet, that materialist tradition of media studies, which attends to infrastructures, environments, and other seldom-noticed but consequential epistemic contexts of media, are making the same sorts of arguments about media as others make about affect: *the middle matters, even if it’s hard to see it mattering*. As Peters puts it, “We are not skilled in knowing how to talk about entities that participate decisively in actions without causing them. To say that a medium matters is not to say that it played a causal role. The medium is in the middle, indispensable to what is going on, but neither the actor nor the acted-upon” (2022, 3). Could something similar not be said of affect?

Certainly, in the strain of affect that claps like a bolt from Spinoza’s *Ethics* (1677/2018), bounces off Deleuze’s echoing sense of affects as “becomings that go beyond those who live through them” (1995, 137), reverberates again in Masumi’s virtual hollow of affects as “intensities” (1995, 2002), and rings still through

Thrift's sense of affects as "non-representational" (2008)—along with many other examples vibrating to similar frequencies—there remains an abiding problem. And that concerns the nigh near impossibility of representing the thinking-feeling of affects in language without already representing something else: a semi-capturable part, perhaps, but not affect's elusive excess. How to capture affects if the most essential "there" of affect is the excess that is not there? Life lives through affects-as-excess. No living being *has* them, because they escape. Affects tether *us* but exceed *me*. Affects are anthro-decentric.

In this sense, situating affect theory within the scenography of individual people just doesn't work. Even humanity itself is too narrow a scale. Opening the analysis to *all* beings (human or otherwise, living or otherwise) is also inadequate if the object of inquiry remains individuated: *your* affects, *my* affects. Deleuze reads Spinoza to have made that point long ago: nothing is ever separable from its relations (Deleuze, 1988).⁶ Spinoza saw these relations as the basis of ethics: how each body, in the endeavor to carry on in its own essence, increases or diminishes the capacity of other bodies to do the same. What we've seen over the centuries since is that affect theory matters through a paradox: affects may be extralinguistic forces, emergent in the encounters between bodies, but the project of living ethically in relation with others requires using language to show that affects matter *because* they exceed language. And how to do that?

If the whole *raison d'*affect theory is that language cannot be the only show in town when it comes to making sense of the dynamic, embodied, and always-on-going relationality that worlds all being, then it is precisely (read: not incidentally) the ways that affect *exceeds* language and subject-ownership that makes it so essential to study. And that creates a problem, because our received ways of studying, or at least of publishing research, whether in the context of academic institutions or in more public-facing venues, is almost invariably through the medium of language. Does it not then undermine the endeavor to think-feel what exceeds language if cramming that excess into language is the means by which to do so? What is the figure of thought, the material expression, adequate to affect theory without undermining the extra/infralinguistic nature of affect that makes it so important to begin with?

What I've been getting at isn't (or isn't only) the problem Elaine Scarry somewhere mentions, of writing a sentence being like wrestling an alligator. Overcoming the damned hard difficulty of saying exactly what you mean is trouble enough for the best of us. That's always going to be trouble. The problem of languaging affect is worse. It's the problem of trying to illuminate a shadow. It's the cat's problem of frantically chasing the watch-face's reflection jumping around

the room, only to paw it and find it's not even there. The point here is that what's become of this capacious area known broadly as affect theory has, more or less from the start, been beset by the *literal* impossibility of answering the question of what affect theory *is*. Assuming, at least, that describing affect *theory* requires some way of describing the *affect* that's being theorized, I just don't see how it's done. No doubt, there are objections a-plenty to this position. You might say, a cloud is extralinguistic, a bottlecap is other than language, and we can still talk about those. Why not affect? You might say, *all* language is imperfect description, there's *always* going to be something lost between a signifier and the thing signified, and that doesn't stop meaning from transpiring. Why would it with affect? Fair enough. These are legitimate objections. But, *but*, I keep coming back to this: neither the cloud nor the bottlecap, and certainly not the beautiful and necessary gifts of language, reach their distinctiveness *because* they are extralinguistic. Affect does. If affect were not extralinguistic, it would be just another flashpan term or framework, defined in tidy italics for academics to gargle until it lost its flavor. It wouldn't be, well, very capacious. And the capaciousness of affect is a big part of why it matters, why it keeps enticing.

In his book on definitional disputes, Edward Schiappa (2003) makes a distinction between facts of essence and facts of usage. A fact of usage, he suggests, is essentially an empirical question: how do people use this word in practice? Prototypical formal dictionary definitions document facts of usage: what a word is taken to mean in its most common ways of being used. That's quite different from a fact of essence, indeed the two are wholly incompatible. The latter says, who cares how people *use* a word, or what they take it to mean in practice if they're outright wrong about its essential meaning? What matters is what that word really means. For Schiappa, because facts of usage and facts of essence are such divergent approaches, these sorts of definitional disputes are best abandoned. We shouldn't look for facts of essence through some rationalist theory of Platonic forms that could probably never be verified anyway, but we also shouldn't rely on more empirically verifiable patterns to find facts of usage, which might be wildly off-base or inconsistent. Instead of thinking about definitions in terms of what something *is*, or even how a word is *used*, we ought to think in terms of how a word *ought* to be understood. This move—from *is* to *ought*—is the one that I keep coming back to whenever I field that deceptively difficult question: “What is affect theory?”

The reality is, affect theory *is* a lot of things, and different things to different people. To ask what affect theory *is* implies there's a thing called "affect theory" that is coherent and stable enough to have something that "it" *is* in the first place. And to some degree, of course there is something called affect theory, and that thing, "affect theory" is certainly *some* things and not others, so it's at least partially knowable, if only from the shadows cast by what it isn't. At the same time, though, and seemingly more and more so all the time, there are so many differences in the range of work that could reasonably all be classified as "affect theory" that the tempting solution is to organize them into discrete strands (doing no favors for their similarities) or gumbo them all together (doing no favors for their distinctions). The Spinoza-Deleuze-Massumi strain that I work through is different from the psychological lineage of Freud-Tomkins-Sedgwick, or the activist-feminist one of Cvetkovich-Ahmed-Pedwell, which is different from whatever it would look like to include Innis-McLuhan-Peters, or the approaches of so-and-so and such-and-such, on and on. But the differences are seldom *entirely* different. In other words, even beyond putting "affects" into language, representing or classifying "affect theory" as a somewhat coherent and stable area of study still can't get around the colliding, overlapping, situationally convergent and divergent modes and histories of *doing* affect theory, which itself attests to affect's immunity to capture and regulation.

How then should I, or anyone asked the deceptively difficult question, best respond? The inescapable consequence that follows from understanding affects to be in-between, neither subject nor object, neither personal nor shared, outside language and prior to consciousness, is that they cannot be reduced thereto without that very reduction rendering them into something different, the way frying meat renders the fat off the bone. Language and affect are incommensurable. Or, to put it more mildly—since there's no doubt that language *is* affective, that language *affects* things—what matters most about affect simply isn't something the medium of language is equipped to capture, the way whistling is great for conveying a tune but just can't knit a sweater.

The *doing* of affect theory—as opposed to the work of describing what "affect" or even "affect theory" *is*—is what we ought to emphasize. Think the middle voice. Affect theory is affecting. What is affect theory? It's *to affect theory*. To change how it operates. To seek and feel for new language, for murmuring ways of worlding what defies capture but matters more than we can possibly say, or

prove, or launch an argument to justify. Otherwise, if anyone ever asks you the difficult question, it may be tempting to revert to the wisdom of young Wittgenstein: “Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent” (1921/2002). But that relinquishment would miss, or even risk giving up, what it really means to affect theory. And for that, the aged wisdom of Czeslaw Milosz may be best: “It is sometimes better to stammer from an excess of emotion than to speak in well-turned phrases” (1990, 110).

Endnotes

- 1.** For more on the infant as an exemplar to distinguish affect from feeling and emotion, see Shouse, 2005. For more on the interpersonal world of the infant, see Stern, 1985.
- 2.** I’ve written about the difference between “affective and symbolic orders” in *Gestures of Concern*. See Ingraham (2020, 39-42).
- 3.** Variations on neurological (or quasi-neurological) arguments about affect preceding consciousness are widespread, including passes through John Dewey (1896), Alfred North Whitehead (1966, 153, 160), Nigel Thrift (2008, 186-187), Brian Massumi (1995, 89), Antonio Damasio (1999), and Tor Norretranders (1998, 221), not to mention the many who have drawn from and mobilized such arguments in subsequent research. Ruth Leys is one of the most ardent critics of this approach, lambasting the premise that affect is preconscious for various reasons, mostly that it’s unsound science (see *The Ascent of Affect*, 2017). For any affect-curious-but-still-skeptical readers out there, Leys is the one to consult if you’re looking to be dissuaded—or to prepare yourself better to defend affect-as-preconscious. For a critical response to Leys, see Donovan Schaefer’s “Rationalist Nostalgia” (2022).
- 4.** Thanks to the great DJ, captain, and champion of generosity, Greg Seigworth, for pointing me to this passage and the one from Berlant.
- 5.** See, for example, the helpful inventory offered in Seigworth and Gregg’s original *Affect Theory Reader* (2010), Margaret Wetherell’s genealogy in *Affect and Emotion* (2012), or the more critical genealogy of Ruth Leys’s *The Ascent of Affect* (2017).
- 6.** Of course, neither Deleuze nor Spinoza can be credited with “discovering” immanent relationality, not least because Indigenous and Native peoples all over the planet have had that basic insight for ages, and not just as a contribution to philosophy.

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