

What is an affect?

On the walk up the Royal Mile to Edinburgh Castle, just before the first gatehouse, there is an actor in full Braveheart costume, collecting for charities by posing for photographs with passers-by. Tourists practice expressive faces with him, showing combinations of resolve, anger, pride, doubt, burden, and vengefulness, as their friends photograph them.

The tourists are creating affects for themselves and for a wide audience. They tailor expressions and the Braveheart story to what they want to portray, whether it is a courageous struggle for independence or revenge-crazed spirit. In doing so, they give us clues as to the nature of affect as distributed individual and social event, rather than isolated psychic, neural, somatic or behavioural state. An affect is mobile, 'complex, episodic, dynamic and structured.' (Goldie 2000, 12) It is individual and social, dominated by a particular emotion, but implicating many others. Each affect extends into the actions it is played out in.

I define an affect as *manifold changes of emotional intensities distributed among long-lasting conscious and unconscious thoughts, acts and environments named by a dominant tone*. Hate is an affect because its changes in intensity cover and reveal other emotional differences in intensity, in fear, revenge and love, for instance. Yet for it to be hate rather than any other affect, hate has to be the dominant tone, the one whose changes in intensity articulate others.

My definition expands an emotion into a complex affect. These affects are implicated in one another; they slide into each other when the dominant tone shifts. Affects are about degrees within multiple relations. We do not jump from hate to fear across a clear divide. They aren't separate states or phenomena. There is instead a realignment of continuous and multiple intensities such that love can become the dominant tone in a pattern once characterised by hate.

Influenced by Deleuze and Guattari's manifesto for multiplicity in *Anti-Oedipus*, the definition does not take an affect to be a totality or an unchanging unit, but rather 'goes beyond the multiple as well as the One.' (Deleuze and Guattari 1972, 50) There aren't individual affects that can be combined into totalities of multiple fragments: 'We no longer believe in those false fragments that, like pieces of ancient statues wait to be glued together and completed in order to compose a unity that is also their unity of origin.' (Ibid) An affect is a multiplicity in a continuous and indivisible sense, neither made of parts nor countable as a part.

An affect should be seen as an unstable pattern of shadings of emotional intensities, bleeding into and across one another with no clear boundaries. It is not a placeholder in a table of distinct phenomena determined by exclusive predicates. The determination of affects is closer to the way we might distinguish a purple dominant and green minor in subtly different shimmering of the Northern Lights. Affects are defined tonally, as individuals belonging to loosely defined and evolving processes.

Affects, acts and environments

Not only do affects merge into one another, they also include thoughts and actions. Changes in emotional intensities are accompanied by conscious reflection on how to live with them, as well as unconscious repercussions and preparations, not only for the individual, but for those who have to witness affects and undergo their consequences.

Thoughts around affects are played out in actions that are themselves dependent on environments. The affect of hate only attains its full reach when the blow accompanies the anger in a particular situation, a milieu. For Deleuze and Guattari faces expressing affects only appear as multiplicities in relation to milieu. (Deleuze and Guattari 1980, 211) The affect is individual and collective because, as emotional event, it takes hold in an individual but this grip spreads through groups of thinkers, acts and environments. When a fearful child becomes a problem for family and school, the affect of fear is distributed across family and school.

The preliminary reason I give for this distributive quality of affects is that they are misunderstood without this disseminated play with other affects, with effect on thoughts, with the way subconscious processes shape the distribution, with its development in acts and with the influence of environment on its evolution and character.

Robert Solomon captures some of the motivation of the move to affect as distributive in his response to work on cognition and emotion as short-lived and somatically located ('more or less over and done with after 120 milliseconds') by LeDoux, Panksepp and Damasio: 'I am interested in processes that last more than five minutes and have the potential to last five hours or five days (or five weeks, months or even years).' (Solomon 2003, 179)

Jealousy takes on different forms dependent on whether it is related to love or to envy. It tends to be more destructive of self and others for the former – Othello's terrible violence and obsessiveness, distributed in deathly fashion among his loves and friendships changing 'trifles light as air' into 'confirmations strong as proofs of holy writ.' (Othello, Act 3, Scene 3, 332) Jealousy is partly determined in its strength, by whether it hinders all thought or sets off fantasies of revenge. It can appear to be waning when in fact it is gaining unconsciously, only to surprise us when it re-emerges. It's these fluxes in intensity and their relation to a struggle between appeals to identity – as well as the challenge of becoming adequate to an affect – that Deleuze and Guattari have most to teach us about.

Acts determine jealousy by modulating its power – in an act of forgiveness, say. These acts and jealousy itself depend on environments, because the setting for the act has an effect on how it can unfold – hence the horror of societies that compound the violence of jealousy by condoning it or reinforcing it with fantasises of male honour and the reality of unjust possession. The subsequent course of events conditions the intensities of the affect. An attempt to forgive might be thwarted by recurring memories of loss. The affect of vengefulness depends on how revenge is taken.

Why is an affect necessarily distributed through these things? Couldn't we think of an independent affect that enters into wider causal relations, such that jealousy is a well-determined and located emotion that then changes and has effects through wider causal interactions? An affect might well alter in different environments, but this does not mean that it is fully dependent on them.

The answer is that when an affect is defined in abstraction its multiple changes in intensity cannot be explained due to the absence of other affects and of thoughts, unconscious processes, acts and environments. This is because abstraction from its distribution misses the nature of affect as modulation of intensities in these distributed fields. Thoughts, acts and environments determine the intensities of affects.

Jesse Prinz poses two problems for the philosophy of emotions. There is the problem of parts which encourages us to look for the right component to attribute to emotion among a number of linked processes: 'There are thoughts, bodily changes, action tendencies, modulations of mental processes such as attention, and conscious feelings. But which of these *is* the emotion?' (Prinz 2004, 3)

There is the countervailing problem of plenty. Rather than seeking to find the right component they are all taken to matter, but this raises the difficulty of how 'they all hang together as a coherent whole?' (Prinz 2004, 18) Deleuze and Guattari's work on affects and their wider philosophies reject the problem of parts and instead seek to answer the problem of plenty when it is combined with the concept of affects as multiplicities interacting with other multiplicities and individuations. How do affects work as dynamic processes through feelings, thoughts, the unconscious, acts and environments?

This question is technical, in the sense of responding to the problem of how we can individuate an affect without depending on a form of identity, without appealing to clear and distinct boundaries, and without relying on a set of predicates. It is also political in seeking to answer the question of how to stop an affect taking over and becoming a destructive personal and political force, in hatred of others or extreme jealousy, for instance.

The insight to take from Deleuze and Guattari is that since affects are complex multiplicities, the problems of identity (of individuation) and of destruction through violent and repressive dead-ends can only be overcome by taking account of interlinked multiplicities and their twin tendencies to negative reliance on identity and the positivity of creative becoming. They define those negative ends and 'black holes' and 'micro-fascisms' leading into more general state-based fascisms (Deleuze and Guattari 1980, 261). Counters to fascisms take place thanks to cautious experiments on the fine balances of the directions, tones and intensities involved in any affect. These trials are already part of popular wisdom – in the ways wise advice and practice seek to balance out hatred through applications of sadness and love, with degrees dependent on cases and environments.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari consider the problem of violence and affects in the potential of romantic music to engender affects leading to terrible political movements and disastrous individual outcomes. The question is how to balance out this catastrophic potential with the more positive work of romantic music on affects, where a people is constituted as multiple and

mobile, and where individuals are given new and affirmative lines of escape, not a force of destruction but rather one of inclusive multiplicity, resistant to the destructiveness of identity politics. How can the power of Romantic music avoid giving rise to destructive sentimentality and instead release positive affects? To make their argument Deleuze and Guattari work through a series of distinctions: between Earth and People, One-Whole and One-People, groups of powers and the individuation of groups and between the Universal and the Dividual. (Deleuze and Guattari 1980, 420)

The concepts of process and balance are critical to any understanding of these distinctions. They aren't based on a logic of exclusion – either, or – but rather a logic of co-implication – both, and. For Deleuze and Guattari, in Romantic music the relation of orchestration to voice is a balancing act around affects connected to processes linked to the harnessing of forces of the Earth – an appeal to history, soil and identity – and forces of a people to come – an appeal to shared new directions, potentials and fleeting unity and power. Music and affect always have these twin directions: confirmation of historical belief and the spark of the new.

In turn, once the affect has been tuned towards historical roots and identity, it is also turned more towards identity as a finished totality, embodied by nationhood, homeland and subjects determined by a shared (if false) universality. Whereas, once the turn is towards a people to come, there is no finished whole but rather the fleeting unity of a people as an ongoing and changing direction, an experiment on new ways of living with and through affects.

The forces of the Earth and of the whole depend on groups of powers. They rely on the harnessing of pre-existing forces (military and bureaucratic, for example) to reinforce and prosecute a form of identity while repressing and seeking to eliminate its foes, its others, out groups to its identity politics. In contrast, the efforts of a people to come are directed and (only ever partly) achieved by individuating a group around an affect.

This people to come could be an emergent commune or a movement responding to a new hope or to a new challenge defined by a shared affect, for instance love, but perhaps also outrage and hope, a yearning for equality, or a will to heal. The difference is between an obsessive grouping, driven by the desire to protect an identity and eliminate its enemies, and the coming together of a people around a common affect such as empathies for fellow sufferers and the determination not to be defined by pre-established rules, morals and expectations.

Deleuze and Guattari's distinction between Universal and Dividual is introduced to avoid having to define the people to come in relation to the predefined and unchanging – Universal – identity of subjects. Instead, complex and multiple affects bring together an equally multiple crowd – a Dividual – where 'a crowd must be fully individuated, but through group individuations that cannot be reduced to the individuality of the subjects that compose it.' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980, 421)

According to Deleuze and Guattari an affect does not make sense as a transforming passion, where it is defined by way of an abstract entity with independent effects, because the transformation is continuous and multiple across fields that include the affect. Its power is not through an operation on things external to it, but rather within fields implicating and shaping it.

My definition of affect as distributive follows from these features of Deleuze and Guattari's work on affects. The core of the following analysis depends on interpretative work by Daniel S. Smith and by Anne Sauvagnargues on Deleuze, Guattari, signs and affect (Smith 2012, Sauvagnargues 2006 and 2009). The idea of sign is important for the definition of affect because changes in emotional intensity are signs for lines of conscious and unconscious thought and action. The affect is not only an event, it is also a sign.

This reference to signs should not be seen as aligning Deleuze and Guattari's work on affects with works that define emotions as judgements (Nussbaum 2001). It is exactly the opposite. The distributive form of affect precedes and denies their organisation according to values and flourishing because the affect is a complex and shifting problem before it can be reduced to a specific judgement and morality.

For Deleuze and Guattari, the affect is always a becoming rather than a property or predicate we could use as a basis for judgement and moral life. They frequently make this point through readings of minor literature, for instance, in Kleist as different from Hegel as thinker of State and majority. Again, the most important feature here is opposition to the interiority and identity of a subject, replaced by a 'form of exteriority' individuated by the affect. (Deleuze and Guattari 1980, 440)

For an affect as becoming, 'feelings are torn from the interiority of a "subject".' The subject loses control because of the affect. Once this begins, identity is lost. The subject's remnants are 'violently projected into an environment of pure exteriority, giving affects an astonishing speed, the force of a catapult.' When this happens, 'love and hate are no longer feelings but rather affects.' (Ibid) This speed is the extreme intensity of the affect, making it something beyond what we know and beyond how we ought to act – as defined by morality, state, society or family. The affect as great speed runs before existing values and practices, calling for new acts and new groupings – the forming of a people to come through a common affect rather than a common identity.

The linking of affects and signs has wide implications for the definition of the sign and understanding of its operation. The technical question I want to pursue is whether we should describe affects and signs as necessarily involving expressivity. The Braveheart example seems to support this view. The facial poses are expressive of the emotional complexity of the event. That's how they become a sign for others.

Against this account of the interaction of expression, affect and sign, I want to make a pragmatic and structural argument for a wider definition of the sign as process (Williams 2016). Accordingly, expressivity is not necessary for affects or for thinking about signs. This is because I define signs as multiple processes where the idea of expression is replaced by a process of selection that names the sign and a series of competing diagrams mapping its effects as it runs through an environment. The affect and sign are given by a selection of elements and then described by different accounts of process. Expression can be one such description, but not the only one. In my definition of the affect, intensive multiplicity is therefore situated on a single plane, rather than between different ones of expressed and expressive.

A face need not express a disembodied virtual power of, for instance, the affect of rage. Instead, the face and perceived emotions and actions, and the flows of intensities around them, are selected in different ways as signs. The concept of expression is a way of characterising this selection, but it should not be taken as the only way.

Deleuze describes affect as multiplicity and its relation to signs and time in Cinéma 2. Flashbacks in film renew sense because they work at 'bifurcations in time'. In a flashback, time splits not only between past and future but also into multiple perspectives around events and circuits in time because a flashback is individual rather than objective: 'The multiplicity of circuits is given another sense. It is not only that many people have flashbacks, but also that each flashback occurs to many people.' (Deleuze Cinéma 2, p 67)

The important point is that multiplicity is constitutive of the sign as flashback, thereby setting up relations between individuals that cannot be reduced to a single objective viewpoint, memory or time. A sign and an affect are forms of relational ambiguity requiring further acts and interpretations – at which cinema excels where time is concerned. Deleuze and Guattari couch this sign and manifestation structure in terms of expression, but I don't think that is necessary. It might even be damagingly restrictive, when compared to a more open and permissive account of a further multiplicity of diagrams of effects following on from a sign.

According to my account of process signs such structures can be named by characteristic selected sets and a suite of diagrams (Williams 2016); for example, the fear set and its accompanying changes in intensities as represented on at least one diagram of the effects of fear running to and from its environment. For this definition of the sign and affect, more than being an expressive art, cinema proposes diagrams following on from signs and affects and producing new ones, themselves requiring further diagrams – for instance in another film or a critical essay, or a life influenced by the film. The dominant tone of an affect would be part of its characteristic set. So though expressivity might be one feature of the set and of the diagram, it is not necessarily so. The wider point is to avoid some of the metaphysical and aesthetic presuppositions of Deleuze and Guattari's accounts – as found in their appeal to powers, types of becoming and subjects – in order to allow for a more speculative and open model.

Affect as read by Daniel S. Smith

In Essays on Deleuze, Daniel S. Smith supports the distribution of affect away from the emotion of a subject to a pre-subjective process running from emotion right through to action. He also endorses the expressive structure proposed by Deleuze. In line with the account of affect given in Deleuze and Guattari, the background to Smith's analysis is the 'dissolution of the subject' in favour of the concept of a mobile and disparate individual: 'An individual is a multiplicity, the actualization of a set of virtual singularities that function together, that enter into symbiosis, that attain a certain consistency'. (Smith 2012, 202)

Deleuze develops this idea of multiplicity in Difference and Repetition through a discussion of Leibniz in contrast to Hegel. To underwrite the resistance of multiplicity to identification any multiplicity brings into line singularities that are themselves impossible to identify, 'the remarkable points and differential elements of a multiplicity.' (Deleuze 1968a, 72) A multiplicity is determined by the 'convergence' and 'divergence' of series, concepts picked up again much later in Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the Dividual and in their twin concepts of territorialisation and deterritorialisation. (Deleuze 1968a, 73)

The first thing to note is the use of the idea of a *set* of things or a *series* of singularities, similar to my use of 'set' in the definition of the sign. This reference to sets will be repeated in Smith's definition of an affect. The second thing to mark out is the nature of the set. It is made up of virtual singularities. Why only virtual? The third thing to notice is how the set is formed: by actualization which brings about a degree of consistency. How does it bring about the consistency that forms the set?

Virtual singularities allow for the definition of a pure affect, that is one that has no actual components dependent on an actual subject for their full being: 'This "something" is what Deleuze calls a pure affect or percept, which is irreducible to the affections or perceptions of a subject.' (Smith 2012, 203) However, expressivity is essential to this definition, even of the pure affect, because as a complex entity the set only comes together when constructed by a process of expression in the actual.

In their last book, What is Philosophy?, Deleuze and Guattari retain this role for expressivity as the necessary transition from pure percept to the material of art: 'It is under this condition that matter becomes expressive: the composition of sensations is realised in the material, or the material passes into the composition, but always to be situated on a properly aesthetic plane of composition.' (Deleuze and Guattari 1991, 185)

This use of expression is an example of what can go wrong in the adoption of a model of expression when it is restricted to different operation according to different fields. What is Philosophy? divides art, science and philosophy away from each other, as shown in the phrase 'properly aesthetic', a wording inconsistent with the continuity and open multiplicity of earlier definitions of affect. A further concern is whether the concept of pure is already problematic for definitions of the affect as a multiplicity in bringing in a sense of absolute into affects that only allow for degrees rather than any summit or *ne plus ultra*.

Returning to Smith's reading, the structure for the expression of the virtual is perplexing, since it involves an external process on a field claimed to be pure. How can it remain pure if it depends on the action of something else for its constitution and consistency? Isn't it touched, and hence imprinted, and hence tainted by its expression through the actual and by the work the pure affect does in return on the actual?

Smith goes on to explain the detailed structure of expression in a reading of Deleuze's Cinema 1 where, in close-up shots, virtual singularities are said to dissolve the face as belonging to a well-defined subject: 'The organization of the face is undone in favour of its own material traits... which

become the building material, the “*hyle*,” of an affect, or even a system of affects.’ (Smith 2012, 205) The process is itself complex and distributed. It is divided into a material decomposition into traits, then a virtual purification into non-subjective singularities, and then a virtual collection and composition.

Expression is not only from the actual to the virtual, as process of dissolution, but also from the virtual to the actual as process of selection or determination. That expression is necessarily a two-way process can be shown by answering a question about sufficient reason. What is the sufficient reason for any particular set rather than no set at all or any other particular set?

The answer is that expression is the sufficient reason for the creation of an affect defined according to a determined set: ‘... what Deleuze calls an affect is precisely the “complex entity” that, at each instant, secures the virtual conjunction of a set of such singular qualities or powers (the brightness, the terror, the compassion).’ (Smith 2012, 205) It is the affect as expressed that ‘secures’ the set, as shown in Smith’s particular selection of brightness, terror and compassion.

In Smith’s description of stills from Dreyer and Pabst, film shots give life to an affect as complex set by dramatizing it; for instance, in a series of close-ups. This does not mean that the film takes a pre-existing emotion, in order to then communicate it. It is rather that the affect comes to life with the film. As selected complex, it does not pre-exist the film, even if all its singularities do in a potential virtual state.

It is a mistake to understand this expression as involving stages, separated according to potential, realisation and value. When flour and water are mixed together to make glue, there is a stage of separate potentials (flour and water) and a stage where these potentials are realised as glue. This stage is said to hold greater value, since it is only in this one that flour and water work as adhesive. The latter stage is also separate from the earlier one, since the glue no longer contains the independent potentials; they have been exchanged for the real predicate of stickiness.

Against this image of realised potential, the Deleuzian meaning of expression can be deduced from this statement by Smith: ‘Art does not actualize these virtual affects; rather, it gives them “a body, a life, a universe” (Smith 2012, 205). When art dramatizes affects, it does not actualize them in the sense of bringing them into reality. It is rather that the staging brings the pure affect together with an ever wider series of folding and unfolding actual and virtual processes. These processes resonate with one another: they form a life. The body – say the face in the close-up – connects the pure affect to an actual thing and thereby determines the virtual affect as a set of singularities corresponding to the features drawn together on the face without a subject.

This unsteady union of virtual and actual comprises a life. This is not the life of a particular subject. It is the interaction of a virtual pure affect and a process of becoming in the individual. This is a transformation of the subject beyond its particular characteristics into ones that are imperceptible from a subjective point of view: ‘Thought in percepts and affects disengages the virtual from corporeal experience and then embodies it in materials that render the imperceptible perceptible (Bogue 2003, 195). This process then extends – the affect is distributed – to form a universe across

the actual and the virtual, where actual boundaries are crossed and where a singular universal is formed by actual and virtual processes.

The paradoxical idea of the singular universal is designed to capture the idea that each affect is singular, because it is different not only with each actual expression, but also as a singular coming together of other singularities which resist repetition as the same. So we do not have a universal in the sense of a thing (an affect) that is the same in each of its instantiations. We have a singular universal that is not only unrepeatable, but also unidentifiable through its components. Nonetheless, it is universal in the sense of untouched by particular instantiations as it is at work in each of them. The affect has no stable parts and does not occur in the same way across different events, while occurring in all of them.

Smith's interpretation brings together four different methods and an important principle. First, his close reading draws as much as possible from all the ramifications of specific passages in Deleuze's work. Second, he connects across Deleuze's work whenever this allows for a deeper explanation of the sense of Deleuze's concepts and arguments. Third, since Deleuze is always in debate with historical positions, Smith tracks back to Deleuze's sources, such as Spinoza and Leibniz. Fourth, the frame for Smith's analysis is a logical one, aiming at logical consistency at the level of philosophical structure; so not simply logical in the sense of agreed premises and attention to specific syllogisms, but rather logical in the sense of a system that accords well.

Finally, there is the counterintuitive but essential principle for any interpretation of Deleuze: we should look for the becoming or transformation of concepts, rather than for their stable core across arguments and texts. This principle fits with the idea of the singular universal. For Deleuze, thought does not work through stable concepts repeated reliably, but rather through changes between a concept and its context, and within the concept itself.

The reference to affects and 'a life' crosses between Deleuze's Cinema 1, his work on the actual and the virtual in Difference and Repetition, his work on Stoic time and event in Logic of Sense, his later book What is Philosophy?, written with Félix Guattari, the second volume of their Capitalism and Schizophrenia, A Thousand Plateaus, and Deleuze's last publication 'Immanence: a life...' (Deleuze 1995)

The concept of life is played out between two planes. The primary plane is '*an immanent plane of consistency* that knows only relations between affects and percepts, and whose composition, through the creation of blocks of sensation, takes place in the indefinite and virtual time of the pure event (*Aeon*).' (Smith 2012, 207) The pure event does not occur in chronological time but rather happens in the past and future at the same time as something that has always happened and is always to happen (Bowden 2011, 21-2).

This means that, as virtual, a life is the coming into consistency of pure affects that aren't happening at a particular time but rather draw all affects from the lost past and non-actual future together. As such, life is a disembodied potential that can be expressed in different ways at different times. The 'here and now' of chronological time – the event as happening – is restricted to the secondary plane of the subject: 'A "subject" is constructed on the transcendent plane of organisation that already

involves the development of forms, organs and functions, and takes place in a measured and actualized time (*Chronos*).’ (Smith 2012, 207) From the point of view of the primary plane the plane of the subject involves an illusion, since its organisation involves the denial of virtual processes of becoming that explain the evolution of its organs and functions.

However, though secondary and involving commitments to illusory entities, the plane of the subject is also necessary: ‘... affects and percepts presuppose at least a minimal subject from which they are extracted, or as an envelope that allows them to communicate.’ (Smith 2012, 208) This presupposition is fundamental to answering the questions about the constitution of affects as sets.

It is through processes of extraction and enveloping that affects become complexes of other affects and percepts. This explains why there is an affect rather than an indistinct chaos or nothing, and why there is a particular affect rather than any other. Expression as extraction and enveloping on the plane of the subject is essential to Deleuze’s account. This raises two further questions. How exactly do the two planes involved in expression come together and have effects on one another? Can sets be constituted in other ways, if we dispense with the distinction between actual and virtual?

Force in Sauvagnargues’ work on Deleuze and art

Anne Sauvagnargues’ two books on Deleuze, Deleuze: l’empirisme transcendantal and Deleuze et l’art, are respectively the most rigorous study of Deleuze as a new kind of transcendental philosopher and the most extensive philosophical study of the place of art as critical and clinical practice in Deleuze’s philosophy.

One way of understanding Deleuze’s solution to the independence of the virtual from its actualisation – a key theme of Sauvagnargues’ book on transcendental empiricism – is through the idea of the event. For Deleuze, an event is dual. First, each event involves an actualisation in the present. The main example for this process is a wound, as given in Deleuze’s very moving work on Joë Bousquet in Logic of Sense (Williams 2008, 153-7).

In terms of feelings, mind and emotions, it is worth noting that this duality of the event shifts discussions of affect and emotion beyond questions of the embodiment of mind as feeling (Damasio 2006, 252) to questions about the disembodiment of both mind and body towards a virtual realm of pure affects. Deleuze’s philosophy is consistent with theses about embodiment and somatic explanations, but it then expands upon them by distributing affect much more widely (Protevi 2009, 99-100).

As event, a wound actualises a series of pure affects, such as ‘to be cut’. A way of understanding this abstract move to the infinitive is through the great variety of ways it can be expressed; for instance, in the many different ways we prepare for, experience, behave under and react to the dentist’s drill. The phrase ‘to be under the drill’ allows for a great many different expressions such that we should think of it as a pure affect that can be actualised in many different ways.

Second, the event involves a virtual dissolving or abstraction away from that actualisation. This means that actual events – their subjects and objects – are set in motion by potential pure changes that have happened and will happen. To express ‘to be cut’ is to be changed with that expression. The actual event involves transformations of its components such that we cannot say there is a reliable subject or series of objects involved.

I am one of those Oliver Hardy people who injure themselves in moments of frustration. If the repair on a window hinge is going badly, I am as prone to jam my fingers in the frame as to calmly arrive at a good mend. What’s important for understanding Deleuze is that the actual squishing of the fingers is not the whole event. It is one concentrated side of it; concentrated deep into the urgency of the present event, as anyone who has flattened their fingers knows only too well.

Why so? Because the jamming is a factor of much wider and abstract affects and forces such as frustration, impatience, clumsiness, hopefulness, despair, haste and confusion. For Deleuze, the howl of the injured DIY enthusiast is not simply pain; it is the concentration of the turmoil of pure emotions, like the fury of the bike rider with another puncture, or the despair of the painter before another ruined canvas: ‘The scream is a social act, the rendering visible of forces. It poses the problem at the level of sensation, rather than resolving it...’ (Ruddick, 2010, 38)

These emotions are abstract because they appear through a life and in the lives of others. We can consider them as pure potentials hovering in the past and in the future, appearing like ghosts whenever we approach a complicated mechanism with trepidation and optimism. The finger jam is an actualisation. My propensity to be confused and enraged is expressed in it. It is also a counter-actualisation. The banal actual event is drawn into an infinite array of those pure propensities.

Each actual event is an expression of pure abstractions and it expresses them in a singular way; for example, where I feel my frustration increasing or becoming more dangerous in a specific accident. The difficulty is the following: why doesn’t that particular expression have an effect on the abstraction, on the pure virtual affect, thereby denying its purity and calling back into a particular actual event and set of predicates in the here and now?

Why does Deleuze call the work of the pure affect our destiny, which can only be reckoned with, rather than chance, which can be forestalled and bent to our will? Justifying what Deleuze calls the neutrality or impassibility of the event to its actualisation, Sauvagnargues’ solution turns on the event’s irreducibility to a series of actual happenings.

The independence of the virtual side of the event, indicated by the ideas of neutrality and impassibility, follows from the ‘bifurcation’ of the event (Sauvagnargues 2009, 349). On the one hand, there is the pure event as ‘having happened’ and ‘to happen’, where the tenses indicate the non-actual and potential aspects of the pure event. On the other hand, there is the event as present occurrence as mere happening, where the tense indicates how everything is condensed into the present occurrence as moment of accomplishment and action. What is the reason for this impassibility?

The answer is that the pure and potential side of the event is not exhausted by its actualisation because it is in excess of the happening, in the sense of retaining its purity in being expressed. What's retained is a power to always be expressed differently. For an affect, this means that it withholds itself in each actualisation, to the extent that when it is actualised again it is a different version of the actual side of the affect. It is a new rage each time.

This sense of excess is different from but related to the more traditional sense of excess in an affect or emotion, such as excessive lust or desire (Blackburn 2004, 24). It is different because it is a formal excess, neither good nor bad in itself, so it does not necessarily have to take on the negative meaning that Simon Blackburn discusses in his study of lust and desire. It is related because this formal excess explains how actual affects always have the potential to change and exceed what is taken to be wise or appropriate.

This implies that each expression brings something new into the actual side of the event: 'artistic events which renew the past' (Boljkovac 2013, 27). This novelty is not drained, or even altered, by its actualisation. It therefore remains to be expressed again – with no trace of earlier expressions. Sauvagnargues lays out the argument in the physical language of cuts: 'The impassibility [of the event] does not consist in transcendence but in an untouched power to bring about a cut in the present of bodies.' (Sauvagnargues 2009, 349) The virtual affect is pure even when it is expressed because its power remains untouched each time it is applied.

Put in terms of time, the actualisation of the virtual is the reason for a cut in the actual present that does not depend on being present: 'Not-yet and always already, it is never in the present, but divides time into past and future: it cleaves time and subverts the present.' (Sauvagnargues 2009, 349) The full argument is that there is absolute novelty in the present. That's why there are events rather than a determined causal unfolding. The reason for the recurrence of novelty is that the source of novelty is a virtual side to the event. The purity of this side both explains the occurrence of the new and the impassibility of the virtual, that it is untouched by its expression in the novel actual event.

Destiny and compulsions are good ways of understanding the argument. If a family suffers from a tragic destiny, or an individual suffers from a deep compulsion, what explains the concurrence of the following apparently contradictory properties? First, we cannot escape the compulsion or destiny. Second, destiny and compulsion keep erupting into actual lives in novel ways which we can act upon. If destiny is part of our actual lives, why can't our acts change it?

The answer is that, as pure, a destiny or compulsion is not altered by its occurrence. It interferes in lives but also remains pure potential. However, exactly because it is pure and ungraspable, when it does occur it is as unpredictable and different: a powerful and inexhaustible reserve of misery and joy. That's why destiny and compulsions cannot be described *in vivo*; they must instead be expressed indirectly.

However, if we move from a principle of sufficient reason allied to transcendental arguments to materialist and physical explanations, reference to the idea of power, as in Sauvagnargues' phrase 'untouched power' shows the extent to which the underlying problem has not been resolved.

Deleuze provides us with a complicated and seamless philosophical system where each demand for a reason or explanation for a feature appears to find its satisfactory response somewhere else in the system. Yet this satisfaction is limited when we turn to material conditions.

It is fine to speak of sufficient reasons within discussion in physics, for example, when trying to accommodate sufficient reason and quantum mechanics (Stapp, 2011). It is not fine to speak of sufficient reasons based on transcendental arguments whose reasons contradict physical ones, because no matter how satisfactory a philosophical explanation might seem within a particular system, it can be negated by an empirically-based counter. For example, the untouched yet effective power of the virtual contradicts the second law of thermodynamics, since the impassibility of the virtual implies there is no energy transfer from the virtual to the actual. If there was such a transfer then we could speak of depletion of the virtual and that would contradict the concept of impassibility.

The answer to this critical point could be that what Deleuze is describing is nothing like a physical process. However, that will not do, because the actual side of the event is a physical process, whether it is the expressive power of increasing redness of cheeks or the fist thrown in the grips of anger. The difficulty remains in describing how these processes interact with pure virtual ones. A transcendental and explanatory account might be good at giving us the architecture of reasons, but it is poor at giving us the detail of exact causes or motivations.

This is where a different approach taken from Sauvagnargues' earlier work on art is helpful. Its sources are not Kantian or transcendental but rather come from the combination of science and philosophy found in Spinoza, Nietzsche and Simondon. This connection between art and affects has been made by others, notably Simon O'Sullivan in terms of art practice (O'Sullivan 2006, 157). Deleuze's major Spinoza book must be seen as the most important early source for this concept of expression (Deleuze 1968b).

The idea of expression is not to be thought in terms of conditions, but rather signs, powers and forces. The change is important, because expression now involves power in the actual: the power to affect and be affected. These changes are explained through the concepts of force and power as expressed in signs of art. (Sauvagnargues 2006, 58)

The combination of power and force is essential to Sauvagnargues' argument, since expression involves both a change in power and the work of forces. We might think that the concept of force would be enough. In the idea that in expressing something we capture a force from it that we can use elsewhere; for instance, in the way we are sometimes enjoined to channel anger. This would be to miss the more profound point that expression does two things at the same time: it alters powers and works through forces. Power and force cannot be reduced to the same thing. But why can't they?

As an aside, it is important to stress the Spinozist rather than Cartesian roots to this appeal to forces. For Sauvagnargues and for Deleuze forces are of the body and the mind, rather than strictly of the body, to then be controlled by a separate soul, consciousness or mind. So when Descartes 'allocates passions to the body' (James 1997, 259) he misconceives the reach of the force of an affect. They tug

right into the sphere of judgement and will, which are themselves directly in the making of passionate forces.

Sauvagnargues' answer to the question of the difference of force and power depends on following Deleuze in distinguishing longitude and latitude in the composition of forces in an actual event. This composition is its haecceity or mode of individuation – all the processes that come together to make it this event rather than any other. Here is Sauvagnargues account of composition, explained in relation to art:

Deleuze thinks of art as the composition of relations of material forces, and of this composition as haecceity, according the longitude of a relation of forces, or speed, and the latitude of power or affect. The group of material elements belonging to a body under relations of motion and rest, speed and slowness, are its longitude. The group of intensive affects that this body is capable of, under this or that power or degree of power, are its latitude. (Sauvagnargues 2006, 60)

Even if we only consider material forces, a distinction can be made between two related states. There is a direct relation where forces apply to each other such that their speeds are altered. When I put two hands on your shoulders and hold you back to teach you about the effect of resistance there is an effect on the speed of your movements. It is a very broad direct effect working on ideas – a quickening of understanding – right through to growth – a strengthening of muscle.

In addition to this direct work, there is also an indirect effect on what a body can do; this is its power to affect and be affected (for a discussion of affects and powers of the body that contrasts with Deleuze's, see Pethick 2015, 18ff). You might become more powerful in some ways. Your increased understanding is transferable to other situations. Your greater strength and feel for the nature of resistance allows you to apply your strength more effectively. However, this is a very complex and mobile change. There could be debilitating sadness in being pushed back or forced to exercise strength in disaccord with your nature, or what passes for strength might turn out to be weakness in new situations.

Sauvagnargues uses the distinction between longitude and latitude to explain the difference between ontology and ethics in Deleuze's account of affect. There is an ethical aspect to the experimental practice of seeking to increase power through the deployment of forces taken ontologically.

We can have a secure understanding of the forces and still have to appeal to a mobile and uncertain ethology in manipulating them to change power. It is here that signs are important because affects work between force and power and are only open to a critical and clinical symptomology: a reading of changes in power and pure affects with no direct control or access.

The distinction between longitude and latitude goes further than arguments for the openness of affects based on novel encounters and it can stand as a further justification for them. When Paola Marrati claims that 'encounters when they take place, create new affects, just as real as they are unassignable from a physiological or organic point of view' she invites the criticism that we cannot

know that there will be new encounters of this type (Marrati 2006, 320). The answer is that every encounter is new in this way, but to different degrees and depending on different problems of power.

How does the distinction between longitude and latitude of forces help to answer the critical questions put in the course of this discussion? It is that expression and signs are not at work immediately between the actual and virtual, but rather there is an expressive relation between longitude and latitude, that is, between force and power.

It is also that the affect remains pure because its changes in intensity relate to power and not to force. So if the distinction between power and force is valid, then it justifies the impassibility of virtual affects. The direct play of forces does not bear on the intensity of pure affects because this intensity plays a role through changes in power which do not involve the same physical laws as forces.

Conclusion: from expression to undetermined selection

In Cinéma 1, Deleuze gives a definition of affect as 'a grouping of an immobile reflecting unity and intense expressive movements'. When we are given a close-up of the curl of a lip – a dismissive sneer of rebellious confidence, for example – the wider life surrounding the curl is the immobile reflecting surface brought together expressed by the lip as it arches. The curl is an expression of an intensity of forces that cannot be traced directly to the reflecting unity but that nonetheless draw them together.

The lip expresses two fields: an actual and a virtual one. In turn, these fields comprise relations of forces and power associated with the affect, its expression and its virtual singularities. The reflecting unity should therefore be read in the sense of 'a life', that is, as the unity of forces, intensities of power and virtual affects that go beyond a given actual life. The curious use of the adjective immobile corresponds to the impassibility of virtual affects and indirect power.

If we take the affect of disdain, as expressed by a sneer, the curl of the lip might express different forces of fear, mistrust, superiority, rebellion, humour and hate. This relation of forces is itself a product of power, that is, the intensity of the forces depends on the intensity of virtual affects we do not have access to. We can only experiment with them in a practical sense, to see what a body can do. Sometimes a sneer and disdain will be a sign of immense creativity (Elvis at the beginning of his career), at other times it will be a sign of great fragility of will (James Dean in Rebel without a Cause).

Deleuze introduces the emotional aspect of affect by defining the physical movements we usually ascribe to emotions, such as a snarl of fearful contempt, as the expression of pure virtual movements defined as pure affects. The expressive snarl conveys changes in the intensities of the pure affects abstracted from particular actual cases. Expression connects to collective reflection in an expressive event, studied through many different types of close-up by Deleuze in Cinéma 1, but

also in Deleuze's work on Francis Bacon where figures such as a scream express pure forces and changes in power in an abstract diagram (Deleuze 1981, 39-44).

Against this definition, my conjecture is that the idea of expression is not essential to the main critical and creative features of Deleuze and Guattari's work on affects. This is because the grouping Deleuze describes can be achieved by the simpler concept of an undetermined selection of a set open to different competing interpretations. The sense of intense relations working through expression can be retained thanks to the idea of intense relations put into play by the selection. It is not necessary to see the selection itself as an expression. We can select a set that includes expressive relations, but they are not necessary for any given selection.

A close-up of lip-curl creates a sign as a selected set with many different elements brought together in a mutual transformation. The problem with viewing this as essentially expressive in terms of reciprocal determination between a virtual and neutral surface and an expressive actual gesture is that this unnecessarily limits what affects and signs can be. We do not require the dual structure of the event and of expression to have all the critical and creative benefits of the idea of a process sign or the idea of wide variety of constructed affects that are complex and distributed.

What matters in Deleuze and Guattari's definitions of affects is the grouping rather than the paradoxical independence yet connection of reflective unity and affective movement. Deleuze explains the grouping through the concept of direct unity in a two-fold structure: '[Compact and continuous series of close-ups] instead arrive at a new reality that we could call *Dividual*, directly uniting an immense collective reflection to the particular emotions of each individual, finally expressing the unity of power and quality.' (Deleuze 1983, 131)

The emotion or affect is never limited to a particular place. It is rather in the unity of movements that express and an infinitely distributed series of pure affects. Direct means two things here. First, the process is not mediated; for instance, through a grid of possible meanings. It is direct interaction. Second, the affect cannot be taken as the addition of one aspect to the other. It is instead a process of direct transformation implicating them together.

We could have thought that an affect worked because a unity was detached from the expressive gesture; for instance, as anger given as social meaning and anger as gesture. What Deleuze and Guattari show is that every affect is a singular event: running through 'a life' as an individuating process. Affect then becomes unique and yet shared in the sense that different manifestations of fold into one another. There is an overlap between different manifestations of anger. My point is that we can have the distribution, singularity and individuation afforded by affect as event, but that the dual expressive structure is superfluous and limiting.

For Deleuze, the reflective surface is not uniform, like a single tone blank slate or *tabula rasa*. It is not simply receptive to the expression of pure emotions. On the contrary, the surface is unification as multiplicity. It is a bringing together of features by the expressive movement, like the faces in a crowd halted for a moment by a loud and frightening sound or first attenders at a distressing emotional breakdown. It is this unification that Smith stresses when he connects the affect to 'a life'. As a concept, though, unification does not require expression. Other processes can unify in this way,

from a chance collage, to a conscious gathering, to a collective endeavour. The idea of expression limits the ways in which unity can be created.

Against ideas of pre-set values applying to stable and recognisable affects, Deleuze shows how affects create the group they occur with, they draw it together not as a preformed receptor but as an extended collective thought process, haunted by the pure emotional changes expressed in the affect. The affect is uncertain as pure emotional multiplicity, as intense expression and as collective reflection.

Deleuze gives his most enigmatic but also most significant account of the uncertainty and infinite extension of multiplicity and affect when he connects multiplicity to Nietzsche's eternal return as never allowing the return of the same but only of difference: 'Eternal return is a power of affirmation, but it affirms all of the multiple, all of chance, *except* that which subordinates them to the One, to the Same, to necessity, *except* the One, the Same and Necessary.' (Deleuze 1968a) Affect as multiplicity puts all things in movement through difference. It is never stays still. It must always be different and never necessary. An affect is a changing event calling for becoming. It is always open and always uncertain.

However, this uncertainty or openness can be achieved without having to resort to the distinction between force and power described by Sauvagnargues. It can simply be posited and subsequently argued for according to whichever process is deemed to have brought about unification. The importance of the simpler model of undetermined selection is that it allows for many different speculative and pragmatic diagrams of the way different elements are changed in their relations by the selection. One such explanation could be expression as understood by Deleuze, but there can be many others. The great advantage of undetermined selection is that it avoids the metaphysical baggage of expression; for example, in the uses of force and power studied by Sauvagnargues.

Against this view, it could be objected that expression is essential for Deleuze due to the importance of the face and body for his account of affect. The movement-affect is a reprise of Deleuze's work from Proust, for instance, in the world and affect as expressed by Albertine (Deleuze 1970, 14 and from Difference and Repetition, for the definition of the ethical as capture, in the idea of the reflection of an unseen field in the terrified face of the other (Deleuze 1968, 334-5). Here, Deleuze's theory of forces seems vulnerable to well-known difficulties in reliably tracking from the face to wider causes; for example, in the screams of Bettlemannia that cannot be easily explained on Darwinian grounds (Deigh 2004, 23).

This objection only confirms the limitation of the expressive model. Why couldn't the rustle of cloth or the shuffling of steps or the jarring idiosyncrasies of a work or the intonation of musical piece convey affect? They do so not because they necessarily express something else, but because they allow certain things to be brought together that count as emotion and affect. We can dispense with expression in a theory of the affect, because manifold changes of emotional intensities accompanied by conscious and unconscious thoughts and acts in the affect only require that they be selected together. This selection is the condition for subsequent and contingent accounts of expression.

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