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Bodies within affect. : on practicing contaminating matters through bioart

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Citation
Wolodzko, A. A. (2018, November 13). *Bodies within affect. : on practicing contaminating matters through bioart*. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/1887/66889

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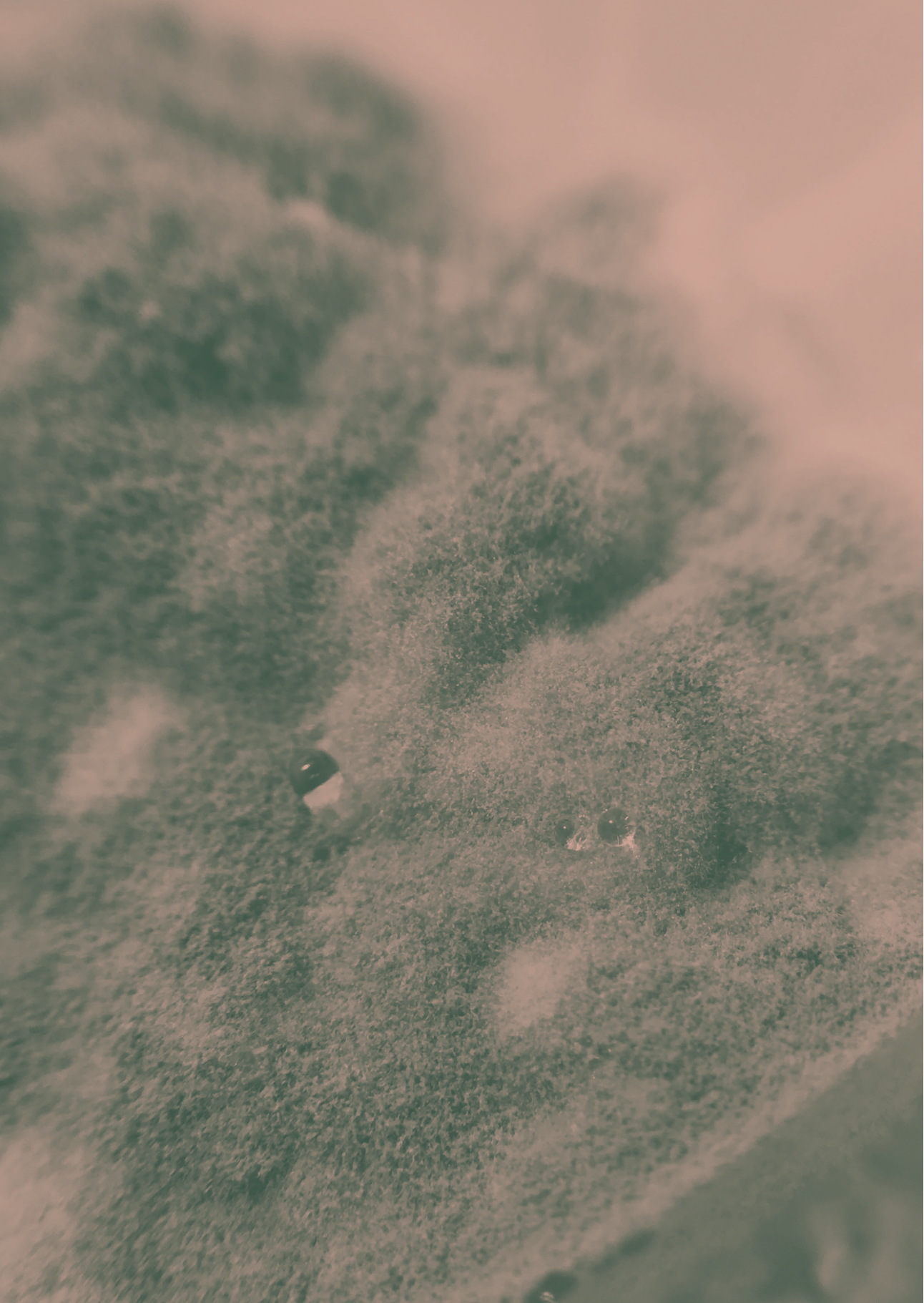
Issue Date: 2018-11-13



Chapter 2
Animal Relations

Affects are precisely these nonhuman becomings of man.[1]

2.1 *Contaminant B* like the Blood of a Horse

In preparation for the performance "May the Horse Live in Me", staged over several months, Marion Laval-Jeantet had injected horse immunoglobulins into her blood stream in order to develop a tolerance to the foreign animal blood. The injection of foreign animal blood can be fatal for the human body, therefore, the blood had to be made "safe," the artist explained. It was thus deprived of "bulky cells such as red blood cells, white blood cells, macrophages, etc." What Laval-Jeantet actually injected was "the plasma, which contains hormones, lipids, and several kinds of proteins (immunoglobulins, cytokines, etc.) among other things."[2] However, the extraction and apparent purification of horse's blood from substances harmful to humans, did not mean the performance was entirely safe. For this reason, the artists could not find a gallery anywhere in Central Europe to host the event. The moment they signalled the need for paramedics to be present and possibly assist during the event, their project met with refusal.[3]

The final performance of Laval-Jeantet injecting the horse blood plasma [Figures. 8 a, b, c, d] took place in the Galerija Kapelica, (Ljubljana, Slovenia) in 2011. Due to the gradual and controlled build-up of tolerance, this injection did not result in Laval-Jeantet going into anaphylactic shock – a severe allergic reaction to a foreign chemical. However, because the extracted components of the horse's blood are closely tied to the nervous system, the artist admitted that in the two weeks following the performance she experienced weakness,

[1] Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, (London: Verso, 1994), 169.

[2] Marion Laval Jeantet, "May the Horse Live in Me," Hemispheric Institute E misférica, http://hemisphericinstitute.org/hemi/fr/e101-jeantet-essay, accessed 9 September 2015.

[3] Marion Laval-Jeantet and Benoît Mangin, "Prix Forum I Hybrid Art - Art Orienté Objet - EN - YouTube," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dxztkwiAJCY, accessed 9 September 2015.

anxiety and oversensitivity. After the transfusion of blood, the artist put on stilts, which were designed to imitate a horse's legs, and carried out a communication ritual with the horse. The horse, called Viny, was the same animal from which the blood was taken and with whom the artist, accompanied by an animal behaviourist, had become acquainted during the ten days of blood injections.

Initially, the idea had been to inject panda blood into a human, due to pandas being under the threat of extinction. Despite the artist's argument that she was willing to become a sort of surrogate for the animal, by extending the panda's life through her body, no zoo agreed to the collaboration. Given the servile nature of the horse's relationship with humans, it became an easier choice. Moreover, as the artist explains, the immunological system of a horse, in comparison to other farm animals, is the most distant from that of humans. A sheep could have been an alternative, however, Laval-Jeantet and Mangin felt the horse, as a larger animal, constituted a greater challenge.[4]

The performance ended with the extraction and freezing of the artist's hybridized blood. As Art Orienté Objet subsequently explained, it was all about meeting with the other body. The extracted blood, although already coagulated, revealing the invasive result of the meeting, became a sort of a relic of the encounter.[5]

Despite the institutional and discursive negotiations that forced the artists not only to follow necessary protocols and policies, but also to change their initial ideas, their work remained remarkably non-teleological and non-instrumental. The performance was not about representing some scientific goal and seeking some transhumanist idea of the fixation of the body into a desired form. After all, although monitored and under medical supervision, the performance appeared to express the impenetrability of the body and the pursuit of expanding the body's porosity. The artists seemed to draw attention to the notion of the human as already posthuman, or rather postanthropocentric – as being already beyond the fixed and given notion of the body, reaching towards its intensive, relational and multispecies dimension and towards affect as a relational way of becoming.

Importantly, this expression of relationality in the form of a meeting of two distinct bodies is far from neutral. Art Orienté Objet's experiment examines what I call affect's relationality as a risky form of transformation. AOO talks in terms transistasis – instead of searching for a convenient balance between bodies, it provokes imbalance, and stimulation from a stable and safe state. The relationality that they exercise becomes contamination which may result in the acceleration or destruction of bodies. The only aim was "to try to feel in another way than human," as Marion Laval-Jeantet explains. The possibility to evaluate such contamination could only be achieved through the act of self-experimentation with one's own body while relating to another. Regarding affect, in this case, the relation of contamination fosters experimentation that is unlike anything we know from science – instead of proving what is there, it creates, invents, modulates and transforms. The

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

contaminating matters of affect thus concern the conditions in which bodies, through their deviations and transformations, create each other, anew.

Figures 8 a, b, c, d. Art Orienté Objet, *May the Horse Live in Me*, 2011, footage from the performance in Galerija Kapelica,(Ljubljana, Slovenia), http://aoo.free.fr/works-2011-001.html, accessed 17 March 2017.

2.2 Experimentations that Resist Identification

Experiment, as a method and a tool, has a long and non-linear history within natural philosophy, science and medicine.[6] It is generally said that experiment as a scientific method of manipulation and intervention constitutes the beginning of the Scientific Revolution, which left behind the strictly observatory and analytical approach within science.[7] Today, experiments have become a demonstration, a proof of the truth or falsification of a hypothesis: "An action or operation undertaken in order to discover something unknown,

[6] On the history of experiment and its philosophical importance see Ian Hacking, *Representing and Intervening: Introductory Topics in the Philosophy of Natural Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[7] See a short historical outline of the understanding of difference between observation and experimentation by Saira Malik, "Observation Versus Experiment: An Adequate Framework for Analysing Scientific Experimentation?," *Journal for General Philosophy of Science 48, no. 1 (1 March 2017): 71-95, doi:10.1007/s10838-016-9335-y; See also Martin Curd, The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Science,* 2nd edition, Routledge Philosophy Companions (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 191-202.

to test a hypothesis, or establish or illustrate some known truth."[8] The method of scientific experiment has become inseparable from the precise conditions and quantitative relations that can be repeated in order to ensure the universal or general validity of findings. In other words, scientific experiment is designed to be repeated in order to be valid. This sense of repetition presupposes a resemblance between singular events and general laws, since to repeat means to maintain the same numerical relations. As Deleuze notices, such scientific experimentation: "is thus a matter of substituting one order of generality for another: an order of equality for an order of resemblance."[9]

As such, scientific experimentation depends on the primacy of identity, which allows for the classification and representation of things. The structures based on identity, representation and signification allow us to function within a discourse that is commonly recognised as meaningful. The problem starts, however, when we take the logic of identity as prompting difference – that is, as the claim to induce something new on the basis of a negative relation to what is already there. Isabelle Stengers calls this model of novelty, founded on the mechanism of negation or going against the status quo, "a contrasted unity" between young, beardless scientists who claim to contradict or modernize established bearded science. However, such endeavours, as she puts it, result in a strengthening of that which was supposed to be overturned: "The kind of science that the youth has learned is the bearded one […] the dreams of the youth, his ambitions, are bearded ones."[10] Affect, like the relations of contamination, cannot therefore be based on this notion of experimentation. The contaminant in the performance of "May the horse live in me", not only provides arguments why, but also shapes a distinct understanding of experimentation as creation, rather than as a demonstration of truth.

Whether Art Orienté Objet's artistic experiment perpetuates the old paradigms can be analysed more closely from the perspective of the practice that it performs, namely xenotransfusion. As Robert Zwijnenberg argues, when writing about the performance "May the horse live in me," the history of blood transfusion from non-human species to human, a practice that dates back to the seventeenth century, served mainly to improve or enhance the health of humans. Animal life and body play an instrumental role in this relationality. As he writes: "xenotransfusion was performed numerous times in Europe, despite the fact that it seldom led to the patient's recovery. […] the beneficial effects of xenotransfusion were reinforced by the notion that the blood was the bearer of emotions."[11]

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[8] "Experiment, N.," *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/view/Entry/66530, accessed 10 September 2015.

[9] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 3.

[10] Isabelle Stengers, "Deleuze and Guattari's Last Enigmatic Message," *Angelaki* 10, no. 2 (2005): 154, doi.org/10.1080/ 09697250500417399.

[11] Robert Zwijnenberg, "Stranger Connections. On Xenotransfusion and Art," in *Institutional Critique to Hospitality: Bio Art Practice Now. A Critical Anthology*, ed. Assimina Kaniari, Athens: Grigori Publications [Εκδόσεις Γρηγόρη], Art History and Theory 5 (2017), 131.

It was the belief that blood has transformative capacities that could enhance and improve the health of humans that perpetuated the practice.

Unlike the historical practice of xenotransfusion, AOO's performance was not about being more human, or acquiring a healthier body. As Zwijnenberg analyses the performance within the historical context, the blood transfusion performed by the artists was "not in order to improve her health at the expense of the horse, but in search of a biological and affective proximity to the horse."[12] It thus seems that AOO does not perpetuate the logic of "bearded science." The artists conducted an experiment that, while it maintained "safety" protocols, was roughly reduced to a condition that guaranteed a non-lethal result. The experiment was not designed to improve something. Instead, it was a trial.

The AOO artists appear to express what the body can do when it meets another body. The possible outcomes were already known, and the artists gave no sign that they intended to prove or disprove the existing facts. Instead, they exercised the power to use one's own body to test out its biologically, socially and culturally established borders: "the purpose was to try to feel."[13] This "try out," renders the etymological roots of the verb "to experiment," which in Latin – *experīrī* – means "to try."[14]

Nevertheless, Zwijnenberg points out that the attempt to break boundaries in AOO's performance is tinted with dark tones. Instead of actually overcoming any boundaries and hierarchies between species bodies, the artists may actually strengthen existing ones. After all, the horse remained passive during the whole process of transfusion, and it was a human that was the main focus of the experiment. As Zwijnenberg concludes,

> Que le cheval vive en moi [May the horse live in me] signals the end of our naïve belief that we can reach a new relationship with animals without radically reconsidering our traditional notions of this relationship; we have to look for new ways that can respond to new materialism's urgent call for a nonhierarchical relationship between humans and non-humans.[15]

In other words, if the AOO experiment is to transform "bearded science", it must not only break the old logic and categories, but also create new ones.

I argue that in the AOO performance, the artists initiate a notion of experimentation that, rather than being based on identity as demonstration of truth, is based on processes of contaminating relationality through which bodies are created rather than identified. Such a creative practice of experimentation is reached by embedding the notion of the partiality of the observer in their approach. Within the experiment, the participating bodies become partial in a sense that no-one is positioned as the autonomous, objective performer.

[12] Ibid., 134.

[13] Laval-Jeantet and Mangin talk at, "Prix Forum I Hybrid Art – Art Orienté Objet – EN – YouTube."

[14] "Experiment, N."

[15] Zwijnenberg, "Stranger Connections," 135.

What matters in the experiment are rather the things studied, that is, bodies and their capacities, coordinates that pose particular values and ways of practice when relating with the living multispecies bodies. In this way, partiality becomes a key concept when grasping the particular notion of relationality that foregrounds what can be understood by affect and its implications. Within AOO's practices of relationality, there are no subject or objects that would belong to the experiment, that would determine its aims and results. Nor is there any experiment that would belong to the particular object and subject. Nevertheless, to ensure that the experiment occurs, its participants must maintain a particular condition. Thus, partiality becomes a condition of a form of experimentation that is based on relationality.

A partial observer finds herself within a relationship that does not belong to her, or to the things studied. For Deleuze and Guattari, "partial observers belong to the neighbourhood of the singularities of a curve, of a physical system, of a living organism."[16] Importantly, partiality as such does not mean acknowledging any limitation or necessity of a particular agentive position of the observer. "The observer is neither inadequate nor subjective,"[17] Deleuze and Guattari argue. Rather, the partiality of the observer constitutes the occurrence of the experimentation – the partiality itself as it happens.[18]

Experimentation based on the partiality, in other words, on a relationality that means none of the participants holds a leading or autonomous position, becomes a resonance in situations of transformation. Rather than discovering what is true, experimentation functions according to what Deleuze and Guattari call "the truth of relative."[19] Within the experiment, we are not occupied with uncovering and finding the truth or with examining the conditions of truth. Nor are we focused on proving a thesis – we are not writing manifestos, as Deleuze argues.[20] Instead, while experimenting, we are mapping what is happening, we are sketching the conditions, creating the programmes and protocols of "how to do" rather than "what to do", so that new relations may be produced: "Seeing, seeing what happens, has always had a more essential importance than demonstrations."[21]

Importantly, for Deleuze and also with respect to AOO's performance, it is not that we undermine the validity of the truth itself in this partial notion of experimentation. We are not presupposing the impossibility of truth or its critique by mapping the relations that happen during the experiment. Rather, we encounter a different logic that is driven by a

[16] Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 130.

[17] Ibid., 129.

[18] "Even in quantum physics, Heisenberg's demon does not express the impossibility of measuring both the speed and the position or a particle on the grounds of a subjective interference of the measure with the measured, but it measures exactly an objective state of affairs that leaves the respective position of two of its particles outside of the field of its actualization, the number of independent variables being reduced and the values of the coordinates having the same probability. Subjectivist interpretations of thermodynamics, relativity, and quantum physics manifest the same inadequacies. Perspectivism, or scientific relativism, is never relative to a subject." Ibid., 129-30.

[19] Ibid., 130.

[20] Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues,* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 48.

[21] Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 128.

different than truth sense of importance. When AOO entered the laboratory using tools and scientific methods, they did so not to imitate and fulfil particular presuppositions, or to verify assumed hypotheses or undermine scientific practice. Rather, their performance was driven by a simple, yet profound need to encounter the body's functions and capacities. By experimenting within the partiality of the encounter, they created new, transformative relations of affect.

Experimentation as such is a way of entering into the space of relations that are already in the middle, between and within bodies. In its performance, AOO's partiality occurs between bodies, undermining any assumptions about their fixed and autonomous characteristic, exploring instead their porosity and fluidity. Deleuze would frame such an exploration, which begins from relations between bodies, in the context of resistance, as a protest against identity and autonomy of bodies: "Relations are in the middle, and exist as such. This exteriority of relations is not a principle, it is a valid protest against principles."[22]

Through its experimentation, AOO resists the principle of fixed and autonomous bodies. However, their resistance, as Isabelle Stengers puts it: "does not mean to criticise or to denounce but to construct."[23] The artists do not criticise the logic of identity, they do not denounce the dominant presupposition that humans desire to relate with other, less privileged animals. After all, Viny, the horse, had no say in whether he wanted to participate in the encounter. However, rather than criticize existing practices when relating to animals, which would demonstrate and identify, for instance, their moral position, the artists follow a different logic. Through experimentation and encounter, a human and a horse become partial – they are foreigners, neighbours of their own artistic, animal, biotechnological and interspecies realm. Such experimentation, an encounter with relations, becomes thus the necessity to resist identification as a form of creation. The creation of new relations of transformation becomes, in other words, a form of resistance.

2.3 *Contaminant S* like the Sacrifice of a Pig

On 26 January 2017, the image of the first human-pig embryo appeared in major newspapers and websites worldwide as well as scientific journals and online platforms [Figure 9]. Contextualized within the rhetoric of fulfilling the scientific dream, the embryo was praised for its promise "of generating tissue and organs for transplantations into humans."[24]

[22] Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*, 55.

[23] Stengers, "Deleuze and Guattari's Last Enigmatic Message," 152.

[24] From video "Scientists from the Salk Institute discuss the breakthrough," in Hannah Devlin, "First Human-Pig Chimera' Created in Milestone Study," *The Guardian*, 26 January 2017, sec. Science, https://www.theguardian.com/science/2017/jan/26/first-human-pig-chimera-created-in-milestone-study, accessed 17 March 2017.

Although the procedure is still in its infancy, and only a few human cells have survived in a non-human body,[25] the discussion around the possibility of animal-human relationality has been fierce.[26]

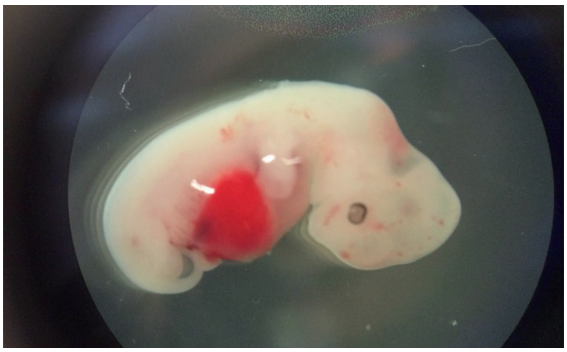

Figure 9. Four-week-old pig embryo injected with human cells. *National Geographic*, http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/01/human-pig-hybrid-embryo-chimera-organs-health-science/, accessed 17 March 2017.

Importantly, neither the pursuit of enhancement, nor the ethical concerns accompanying such endeavours portrayed these biotechnological chimeras as monsters today. The word "chimera", after all, is the name of a monster from Greek mythology, which has a lion's head, goat's body and serpent's tail. It was considered to have the most illogical body composition and, consequently, it was embraced with fascination, but it was also feared.[27] Similarly, a different Greek mythological figure such as Minotaur, with the body of a man and head of a bull, was a sign of punishment for disobedience. Its role was to evoke terror and prevent any deviations from what was considered to be the norm. In this way, within the mythological imagination, animal characteristics in humans are an expression of wrongdoing, immoral behaviour or heresy.[28] By visualizing the lack of boundary between bodies, the mythical chimera was able to sustain the order of things, keep the binary boundaries intact, maintain fixed identities and ascribe essential moral values and roles rather than blur them. Myths, as Levi Strauss argues, "provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction,"[29] rather than sustaining it.

[25] See Jun Wu et al., "Interspecies Chimerism with Mammalian Pluripotent Stem Cells," *Cell* 168, no. 3 (January 26, 2017): 473–486.e15, doi.org/10.1016/j.cell.2016.12.036.

[26] Devlin, "First Human-Pig 'Chimera' Created in Milestone Study"; James Gallagher, "Human-Pig 'Chimera Embryos' Detailed," BBC News, 26 January 2017, sec. Health, http://www.bbc.com/news/health-38717930, accessed 17 March 2017; Nicholas Wade, "New Prospects for Growing Human Replacement Organs in Animals," *The New York Times*, 26 January 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/26/science/chimera-stemcells-organs.html, accessed 17 March 2017.

[27] See Anne Roes, "The Representation of the Chimaera," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 54 (1934): 21–25, doi.org/10.2307/626487.

[28] See Phillip Karpowicz, Cynthia B. Cohen, and Derek J. Van Der Kooy, "Developing Human-Nonhuman Chimeras in Human Stem Cell Research: Ethical Issues and Boundaries," *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* 15, no. 2 (2005): 107–8; Shane Patrick McNamee, "Human-Animal Hybrids and Chimeras: What's in a Name?," *JAHR – European Journal of Bioethics* 6, no. 11 (6 May 2015): 47–48.

[29] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, (New York: Basic Books, 1963), 229.

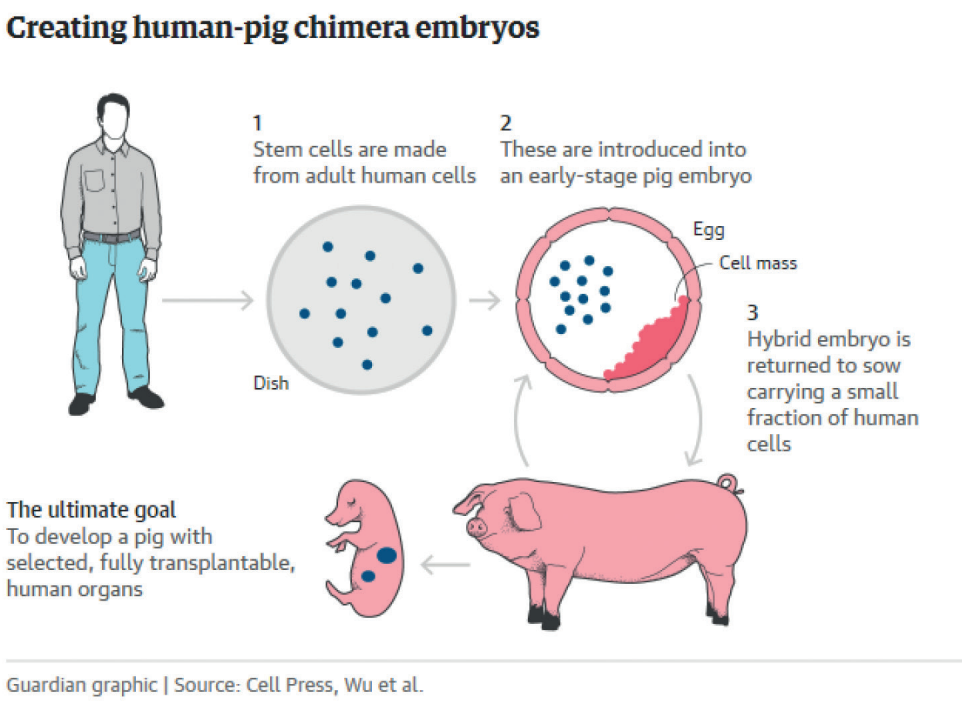

Figure 10. Creating human-pig chimera embryos, *The Guardian*, https://www.theguardian.com/science/2017/jan/26/first-human-pig-chimera-created-in-milestone-study, accessed 17 March 2017.

Today, biotechnological chimeras have a soft pink colour and are accompanied by equally rose-coloured diagrams explaining the processes of transformation [Figure 10]. Rather than generating fear in order to sustain habitual and biological boundaries, the new chimeras promote transformations and mutations. With the new biotechnological possibilities – methods such as xenotransplantation, i.e. the transformation of living cells and tissue from one species to another – boundaries are blurred, diminishing any fears from the past. Accompanied by a rhetoric of the myriad advantages for human health and well-being, there is a newfound trust in human and animal relationality and its necessity if we – humans – want to lead a better, more sustainable life.

As Donna Haraway wrote in her *Cyborg Manifesto*: "the boundary between scientific and social reality is an optical illusion."[30] Within the new biotechnological, biomedical practices, we are already what she calls cyborgs, chimeras that render the distinction between organic and inorganic, human and animal, irrelevant. The lack of significance of the old categories is grounded in a shift of thinking in terms of what we find important. Rather than fixating on what is, what is essential, we focus on how could we live otherwise: "The cyborg is our ontology […], it gives us our politics. The cyborg is a condensed image of both imagination

[30] Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature,* 1st edition (New York: Routledge, 1990), 149.

and material reality."[31] As such, the cyborg is "committed to partiality,"[32] Haraway argues. The cyborg, the contemporary biotechnological chimera, is without resentment of the past, of the search for lost identity. It rather becomes the persona of creative experimentation, embodying the continuous process of mutating and living in-between.

[31] Ibid., 150.

[32] Ibid., 151.

Figures 11 a, b, c, d. Elio Caccavale, *Utility Pets*, 2004, http://hypernatural.com/museum/elio_caccavale.html, accessed 19 March 2017.

In this way, the image of the first human-pig embryo seems to express the hope of Haraway's cyborg. The soft colours, the wetness of the moment captured by the microscope's camera, evokes the excitement of the encounter with life, with the new and mysterious form of living body, calling for care, rather than fear. However, alongside fascination and the desire to fulfil the scientific dream, the questions of how to live, how to practice these new biotechnological bodies embedded in a radical human-animal relationality creep in.

The urgent question in the face of these biotechnological chimeras is thus not when and how the science can create them, but how to live when the boundaries are blurred, how to practice the human-nonhuman relationality that we have become? In the biotechnological age, it is science that produces new images of bodies, while it seems that it is for art to experiment with how we are to live within them.

Utility Pets (2004) by Elio Caccavale is such a speculative experimentation with the new image of our multispecies bodies [Figures 11 a, b, c, d]. Caccavale imagines here what life might be like once xenotransplantation becomes our everyday reality: "In an imagined not so-distant future, shortly after birth, people will be given a piglet with their own DNA engineered into it. The pig, known as a knockout pig in the scientific jargon, is a form of a living insurance policy – an organ bank."[33] This speculative project, however, explores how our relations with these animals might develop and function when the clear boundaries between species are blurred. The animal used to serving as food or companion becomes

[33] "Utility Pets," Work, V2_Institute for the Unstable Media, http://v2.nl/archive/works/utility-pets, accessed 16 March 2017.

something in-between, neither to be consumed, nor to be played with, and yet both. The pig is to become you, it is already part of you, carrying your genes, which makes the animal a blood-related family member, rather than a pet.

With the new interspecies reality, new questions and practical dilemmas emerge: how should you live with a pig not only as your pet, but as a part of you? Caccavale imagines thus a series of toys and stimulations for pigs, to ensure not only that they have a healthy existence, but are happy and connected to human life:

> The Utility Pet products include a low-resolution TV exclusively for pigs, which they can control by themselves: a pig toy with a microphone and a radio handset allowing the owner to listen to the pig enjoying itself; a smoke-filtering device allowing a person to smoke in front of the pig without it suffering the consequence of passive smoking; and a comforter – a psychological product made from the snout of the sacrificed pig, which serves as a memento after the xenotransplantation has been carried out, and helps people come to terms with the contradictory feelings generated by this complex situation.[34]

Caccavale imagines ways of maintaining and exploring the close relationship between human and non-human. Instead of focusing on the uneven power relationality between species, as result of the obvious utility of the pig for the human purposes, the speculative work experiments with a relationship of compassion, care and ensuring a sense of happiness for the non-human. A deep, yet asymmetrical relationship between human-pig prompts a realization, not only about the need to manage the risks of xenotransplantation, but mostly about ensuring new ways for both species to live contentedly. In this way, instead of demonizing the biotechnological future that has already become a scientific possibility, bioartists such as AOO and biodesigners like Caccavale experiment with contaminations by creating the spaces that make them possible. Through creation of contaminations as part of the process of understanding and living, the new hybrid bodies become themselves transformative ways for us to live, whoever we may become – selfish killers, companion species or both?

2.4 The Becoming of Affect

Bioartists and biodesigners actualize the sense of experimentation, in the sense that to experiment is to enter the sphere of relations and make them anew. This happens not by destructing the old established relations, but by adding another one, and another to

[34] "Wild Things (Blowup Reader 1)," Page, V2_Institute for the Unstable Media, 60, http://v2.nl/archive/articles/wild-things-blowup-reader-1, accessed 16 March 2017.

the already existing.[35] Importantly, the sense of relationality exercised in AOO's and Caccavale's contaminants is not determined by the participatory bodies. This means that neither the blood of Viny mixed with the human body of Laval-Jeantet, nor the human-pig companionship completely regulate what will actually happen during the encounter. Rather, the contaminants discussed create the spaces where the human-non-human relationality may be practiced and experimented with – lived through.

Deleuze calls such a phenomenon the exteriority of relations with regard to their terms.[36] This implies that the change of relations does not change the bodies that participate in such relationships. In the case of the work of AOO, this would mean that the artist's encounter with the other body cannot result in a change of either body. Instead, it only creates a new relation; it adds to the existing relationship between the human and the horse. How, then, can we talk about the sense of relationality that engenders and produces bodies? However, Deleuze stipulates: "This exteriority of relations is not a principle, it is a vital protest against principle."[37]

To experiment, that is, to enter a relation, is to question the primacy of identity. It is an attempt to create that begins not from a sense of given identity, but from a relation – a form that occurs in-between bodies. What, then, is a relation that foregrounds the AOO experiment and Caccavale's speculative project? To think in a relational way and to practice these relations implies taking these questions seriously: can we create encounters that change not only relations between bodies, but also the bodies themselves? If a manipulation does not really change the body, but, on the grounds of the exteriority of relations to their terms, we can only manipulate these relations, we need to ask about the implications of such manipulation.

Biotechnological manipulation of bodies that blur any fixed boundaries are driven by the sense of transformation, which, *telos*, is a sheer exploration of a body's capacities. Bioartists and biodesigners promptly explore these transformations that expand bodies and their materiality by making a body's borders more porous and more relational. Deleuze conceptualized such a drive towards transformation in the notion of becoming as an ontological basis for every life and creation. Becoming happens beyond given subjects, identities and the comparisons between them. As Deleuze and Guattari write, becoming, as a movement of transformation, "places elements or materials in a relation that uproots the organ from its specificity, making it become "with" the other organ."[38] Becoming is an event that can be captured by a verb rather than a noun. This means that it is important to experiment with what bodies can do, rather than focus on what they are. This is a Spinozian plea, drawn from his *Ethics* and put into motion:

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[35] See Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 68–69.

[36] Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*, 55.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi (London: Continuum, 2004), 285.

> Nobody as yet has determined the limits of the body's capabilities: that is, nobody as yet has learned from experience what the body can and cannot do, without being determined by mind, solely from the laws of its nature insofar as it is considered as corporeal. For nobody as yet knows the structure of the body so accurately as to explain all its functions, not to mention that in the animal world we find much that far surpasses human sagacity, and that sleepwalkers do many things in their sleep that they would not dare when awake clear evidence that the body, solely from the laws of its own nature, can do many things at which its mind is amazed. Again, no one knows in what way and by what means mind can move body, or how many degrees of motion it can impart to body and with what speed it can cause it to move. Hence it follows that when men say that this or that action of the body arises from the mind which has command over the body, they do not know what they are saying, and are merely admitting, under a plausible cover of words, that they are ignorant of the true cause of that action and are not concerned to discover it.[39]

Experimentation with bodies' capacities leads to the construction of the unexpected, of new knowledge, "nonhuman becomings of man,"[40] human-pig bodies, and horse-woman friendships that become creations that cannot be presupposed. Since we do not know what our bodies can do, by experimenting, seeing what happens, we create spaces of relationality, the body's capacities at work. Deleuze and Guattari, following Spinoza, call such generation of new relationality through experimentation alliances:

> Alliance or the pact is the form of expression for an infection or epidemic constituting the form of content. In sorcery, blood is of the order of contagion and alliance. It can be said that becoming-animal is an affair of sorcery because (1) it implies an initial relation of alliance with a demon; (2) the demon functions as the borderline of an animal pack, into which the human being passes or in which his or her becoming takes place, by contagion; (3) this becoming itself implies a second alliance, with another human group; (4) this new borderline between the two groups guides the contagion of animal and human being within the pack.[41]

[39] Baruch Spinoza, Ethics, III P2 Scholium, in Baruch Spinoza, *Spinoza: Complete Works*, ed. Michael L. Morgan, trans. Samuel Shirley, 1st edition (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2002), 280.

[40] Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 169.

[41] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 272.

Becoming as experimentation with contagion situates itself within a relationality that generates new bodies. The contagion of becoming creates unexpected alliances, cyborgs and chimeras that transgress their borders. Becoming of bodies happens thus within relationality, as a movement of transformations beyond fixed subjectivity and presupposed purpose; it is continuously driven by the "force of methamorphosis."[42]

This continuity of becoming as a movement of transformation, experimentation that happens within relationality and between bodies, demands an equally relational way of thinking. The logic driven by becoming is not based on identity and boundaries outlined by subjectivity. Rather, the thinking that transformative experimentations and contagious becomings enforce must take a transformative movement of relationality. How, though, should we use such an affective logic of transformative relations in a way that sustains, rather than resists, the movements of contamination? In other words, how can our chimeras foster change, rather than perpetuate old fears and ideas?

Eugene Thacker's definition of "biotech," is useful in this regard. He argues that the biggest concern in the discussion of the new bodies within biotechnological practices is not their disembodiment or the practice of body manipulation:

> Biotech is not to be confused with bioengineering or prosthetics; that is, biotech is not about interfacing the human with the machine, the organic with the nonorganic. Rather, biotech is about a fundamental reconfiguration of the very processes that constitute the biological domain and their use toward a range of ends, from new techniques in medicine to new modes of agricultural production, and to deterrence programs in biowarfare.[43]

Rather, biotech forces the use of relationality in generating new, hyper-biological bodies.[44] The threat concerns our ignorance of how biotech uses this relationality. In biotech practice, biological is more biological, while what is considered to be natural is even more natural. Bodies are to be purified from diseases, given new imperceptible, yet sustainable capacities so that every enhancement becomes the fulfilment of the dream of an already given idea. As Thacker explains, within biotech, the practice of relationality is done "by harnessing biological processes and directing them towards novel therapeutic ends."[45] By implementing such processes of relations into given ideas, bodies are presupposed not as an event generated through relationality, but as encoded information, ready to be coded and decoded. A relational understanding of bodies is used here to manipulate such ideas as health, beauty and human dignity according to presupposed, fixed aims. Thacker calls this

[42] Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (London: Continuum, 2002), 39.

[43] Eugene Thacker, "Data Made Flesh: Biotechnology and the Discourse of the Posthuman," *Cultural Critique* 53 (2003): 94–95.

[44] Ibid., 86–88.

[45] Ibid., 93.

"biotech informatic essentialism,"[46] which does not ignore the relational and processual nature of bodies, but primarily uses the relational nature of bodies to maintain desired identities, hierarchies and values.

In other words, when used within fixed frames of identity and its desires, relationality loses its transformative capacity. When we put bodily relations and processes into practice in a way that governs those bodies, rather than creating and experimenting with their capacities, then the old hierarchies, ideas and power structures are strengthened. Affect, understood as relations of transformations, when unspecified and misused, may thus strengthen essentialism. Rather than experimentation by creation of the spaces of relationality, affect might be a tool for fulfilling given ideas through the fixation and identification of bodies. While I have already outlined the basic understanding of affect – as transformative and contaminating relations – to understand its profound implications and the importance of its use, a closer analysis of affect as an analytical and yet practical tool is urgent. I argue that in order to understand the implications of affect, that is, bodies within affect, in a way that would not follow essentialist presuppositions, as specified by Thacker, it is crucial to familiarize ourselves with the conceptual history of affect and why it was introduced into the philosophy in the first place. In order to analyse relationality beyond Thacker, I return to Spinoza's writings on affect.

Spinoza's understanding of affect outlined in *Ethics* reveals the particular animality of relationality that is imperative in my study of bodies within affect. In the next section, I will focus on the main characteristic of affect as discussed by Spinoza and examine how it was rewritten in Deleuze's study, in which affect is argued to be (a) distinct from emotion; where it is discussed as (b) an encounter and movement of thought and body; and where affect is (c) expressive – it not only happens between bodies, but it also generates those bodies. In this way, by focusing on these three characteristics, the delineation of the implications for the practice of affect will become clearer.

2.4a Affect: Affectus or affectio?

Within the contemporary use of affect there is much confusion about what affect is. Affirmatively applied within cultural and political studies, the notion of affect is usually without a firm distinction and specification. The word "affect" is treated interchangeably with emotions, with the state of the body and the body's power for action. At the same time, affect when used as synonymous with affection can mean being against representation and identification and instead imply more embodied approaches of analysis and understanding.

However, as Deleuze has already remarked, this confusion derives from the wrong definition and interchangeable use of two terms that Spinoza distinguished from each other:

[46] Ibid., 92.

affectus and *affectio*.[47] Indeed, when we look, for instance, at the translation by Samuel Shirley of a passage from Spinoza's *Ethics* in Part III, Definition 3, the terminological confusion begins:

> By emotion I understand the affections of the body by which the body's power of activity is increased or diminished, assisted or checked, together with the ideas of these affections. Thus, if we can be the adequate cause of one of these affections, then by emotion I understand activity, otherwise passivity.[48]

The same passage is translated by W. H. White and A. H. Stirling as:

> By affect [in Latin: affectum, II declenation Acc. from affectus] I understand the affections [affectiones, III declenation Acc. plur. from affectio] of the body, by which the power [potentia] of acting of the body itself is increased, diminished, helped, or hindered, together with the idea of these affections [affectionum, III declenation Gen. plur. from affectio]. If therefore, we can be the adequate cause of any of these affections [affectionum], I understand the affect [affectum] to be an action, otherwise it is a passion.[49]

White and Stirling, like Deleuze, notice Spinoza's differentiation regarding *affectus* and *affectio*, and translate *affectus* as affect and *affectio* as affection. The translation of the word *affectus* as emotion is unfortunate and misses the meaning of the word *affectus* as used by Spinoza. The etymology of the word "emotion" refers to the Middle French *esmocion*, *esmotion*, *emotion* (French *émotion*) and Latin *moveo*. *Emotion* denotes "civil unrest, public commotion," "agitation of mind, excited mental state, movement, disturbance;"[50] and *moveo* that means "to move, stir, set in motion, shake, disturb, remove."[51] However, the word emotion also refers to "strong feelings, passion; (more generally) instinctive feeling as distinguished from reasoning or knowledge,"[52] and, as such, was used, for instance, by Descartes to describe the motion of spirit that agitates and disturbs the thoughts.[53] The distinction between affect and emotion becomes clearer, however, and also important for

[47] Gilles Deleuze, "Lecture on Spinoza at Vincennes in 24.01.1978," trans. Timothy S. Murphy, webdeleuze, https://www.webdeleuze.com/textes/14, accessed 24 April 2017.

[48] Spinoza, *Ethics*, in *Spinoza. Complete Works*, 278.

[49] Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. W. H. White and A. H. Stirling, (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 2001); In brackets are the Latin terms used in this passage by Spinoza, see *Spinoza: Works in Latin*, http://users.telenet.be/rwmeijer/spinoza/works.htm, accessed 11 September 2015.

[50] "Emotion, N.," OED Online (Oxford University Press), http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/view/Entry/61249# eid5521328, accessed 17 September 2015.

[51] "Charlton T. Lewis, Charles Short, A Latin Dictionary, Mŏvĕo," http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0059%3Aentry%3Dmoveo, accessed 24 April 2017.

[52] "Emotion, N."

[53] René Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul* (Hackett Publishing, 1989), 338–39.

our further understanding of relationality of affect, when looking at Deleuze's distinction between *affectus* and *affectio*.

In the lectures on Spinoza at Vincennes on 24 January 1978,[54] in order to signal the importance of the distinction between *affectio* and *affectus*, Deleuze introduces the relation between *affectus* and an idea. He asks: "what is an idea?" As he further explains: an idea "is a mode of thought which represents something. A representational mode of thought." Affect (*affectus*), for that matter, is a "mode of thought which does not represent anything." Deleuze adopts Spinoza's causal understanding of affect, where *affectus* is positioned alongside the word *transitio* [*Ethics*, III, P59S]. The Latin *transitio* refers to "going across or over, a passing over, a passage."[55] *Affectus* "refers to the passage from one state to another,"[56] and, as such, Deleuze argues, it is purely transitive and therefore cannot indicate or represent something.

Affectio, on the contrary, is a kind of an idea. The Latin *affectio* means "a change in the state or condition of body or mind, a state or frame of mind, feeling."[57] It is an effect of a body acting upon another body. Moreover, because every action of a body involves contact with another, it always leaves a trace [*Ethics*, II, P17]. When *affectio* is translated as affection, it refers to the state of a body that has undergone a transformation. As such, affection becomes "a mixture of bodies" – with one body acting and leaving traces of this action upon another body. Importantly, as a kind of idea, *affectio* is already a particular state of the body. It thus involves a representation and identification of the act of transformation, from which it is, nevertheless, never separated.

For Spinoza, the distinction between *affectus* and *affectio* has crucial implications for our understanding of how we acquire knowledge about bodies. My argumentation also reveals the particular importance of relationality when thinking with affect. However, before we delve deeper into this, it is imperative to look closer at what Spinoza considers as knowledge with regard to the sense of *affectio* and *affectus*.

According to Spinoza, affection (*affectio*) does not result in "true" knowledge. If it constructs knowledge, it regards only "the nature of the modified body," and not the body that it is modifying. In other words, we know only the results of the body's action, which we can observe in the changed state of the other's body. *Affectio* does not, however, elicit the explicit cause of this change – the exact nature of the acting body. Consequently, Spinoza considers affection to construct inadequate knowledge: "the ideas we have of external bodies indicate the constitution of our own body rather than the nature of external bodies" [*Ethics* II, P16, C2].[58]

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[54] Deleuze, "Lecture on Spinoza at Vincennes in 24.01.1978."

[55] "Charlton T. Lewis, Charles Short, A Latin Dictionary, Transĭtĭo," http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0059%3Aentry%3Dtransitio, accessed 24 April 2017.

[56] Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley, 1st in English edition (San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 2001), 49.

[57] "Charlton T. Lewis, Charles Short, A Latin Dictionary, Affectĭo," http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0059%3Aentry%3Daffectio, accessed 11 September 2015.

[58] Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. W. H. White, 63.

By adequate knowledge, Spinoza means understanding all causes and determinations. However, due to our finite mode of existence – our mortality – all that we can perceive is the result of another body's actions; that is to say, we can only perceive affections of affects. Thus, we can only come close to an adequate knowledge, the knowledge of all causes, through what Spinoza calls "common notions." Common notions are things that are common among other bodies, such as the sense of extension, motion and rest [*Ethics* II, P38, P39]. However, how can we gain these common notions? How can we grasp what is common among bodies? According to Spinoza, we cognize common notions during encounters with other bodies. Only through relations with other bodies can we perceive what is common with our body: "the more things the body has in common with other bodies, the more things will the mind be adapted to perceive"[59] [*Ethics* II, P. 39, Corollary]. In other words, to acquire adequate knowledge, the common notions, we must experience multiple connections, encounters with other bodies – we must experience various affects. The more relations (*affectus*) we experience, the closer we come to the generation of adequate knowledge.

Careful reading of Spinoza's differentiation between *affectio* and *affectus*, between relations and the ideas or states of bodies resulting from these relations, allows us to acknowledge the importance of relationality between bodies. Although our knowledge about bodies is anticipated by ideas about those bodies (affections), through encounters with other bodies (affects), we can overcome the stability of affection and come closer to what Spinoza considers adequate knowledge. In this way, the particular *affectus–affectio* relation is not based on determination. Affects cannot be determined by affections. To put it differently, our relations with other bodies cannot be determined by our ideas about those bodies. AOO's performative experiment analysed earlier in this chapter tacitly exercises this indeterminism: we may have an idea of a horse and a human body, we may also have an idea about the principles and laws that determine the cause of the experiment; however, exactly what happened during the encounter between these two bodies, the dynamic intensity between the artist's body and the horse's blood, remain indifferent to the given representations. This is what Deleuze meant by the exteriority of relations. He indicated the need to enter a relationship for the sake of stepping away from the modes of fixed states of bodies. The sphere of relation is the sphere of encountering what bodies can do, a sphere where the movement of bodies' power as *potentia* is at work.

Affect is a passage, a transition between bodies and it should be understood as a dynamic movement. Indeed, it cannot be captured and defined in terms of properties, since then we would presuppose its characteristic to be of that of a state or of an idea. Precisely this falling into representation while losing the dynamism of an encounter happened to the artists of AOO when they wanted to capture that which could not be captured in their experiment. When the artists tried to seize the intensities of the encounter between two bodies by extracting the mixed blood into the Petri dish, it resulted in the blood coagulating. The

[59] Ibid., 78.

dynamic and violent character of blood transformation resulted in its destruction in the moment of identification, and even the artists that participated in this experiment could not control the event of transformation with their desire to commodify it into a given object. However, what is crucial for our understanding of affect is not the fact that we cannot capture it, but rather that, because we cannot capture affect in the form of a given object or idea, it forces us to take a different approach – it implies different tools of practice.

Because, as Spinoza argues, "bodies are distinguished from one another in respect of motion and rest, quickness and slowness, and not in respect of substance"[60] [*Ethics*, II, P13, Lemma 1], affect implies a different approach, one not based on the sense of identity and properties of things. Affect, as the relational way of being of bodies, involves a sense of the difference between bodies, which necessarily renders a relational understanding of the body. Moreover, the relationality of affect not only regards the way of being of bodies, but also bodies' continuous determination by relations with other bodies: "A body in motion or at rest must be determined to motion or rest by another body, which was also determined to motion or rest by another, and that in its turn by another, and so on ad infinitum"[61] [*Ethics*, II, P13, Lemma 3]. Finally, the notion of affect that determines the relational nature of bodies, also determines the relational character of knowledge about bodies – it is a determination resulting from ongoing and multiple encounters.

In order to know the body, we must first understand how bodies act and relate to other bodies. This was an unusual statement during Spinoza's era, since all bodily states and relations were generally considered to contradict Nature and were the result of a weak human disposition. However, on the basis of his monism, where *res extensa* and *res cogitans* are the one substance, the one thing, albeit expressed in different ways [*Ethics*, II, P21, P7S], Spinoza argues that all human conduct and affects, rather than being essentially different from Nature and even contradictory to Nature [*Ethics*, III], belong to the power of nature. Spinoza thus introduces an understanding of bodies that is based on the degree of movement and rest, and the capacity for movement and rest. Knowledge involves bodies' adaptability within affects as *affectus*; in other words, it becomes a movement of transformative encounters [*Ethics* II, P13, S]. It is, therefore, invalid to search for essence or identity in our bid to understand bodies, as this will only lead us to a body state that contradicts body's continuous changes and transformations. Such a definition of affect implies a different practice, one that focuses on mapping and experimenting encounters.

2.4b Good and bad encounters

Affect can not only be mistaken for emotion, it can also be considered as having a fixed set of relations that correspond to all bodies. In order to appreciate the necessity for relational thinking when considering the relationality of affect, the study of kinds of relations and their movements is therefore crucial.

[60] Ibid., 58.

[61] Ibid.

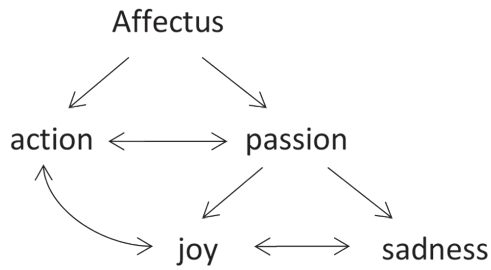

Figure 12. Diagram representing the kinds of encounters as described by Spinoza. Drawing by A. A. Wołodźko.

Described in terms of causes, Spinoza distinguished two kinds of encounters–affects: passions and actions [Figure 12]. Passions originate outside one's body and, therefore, we can only know their inadequate cause since its effect, although perceived in our body, cannot be definitely traced and fully determined. Actions, on the other hand, are affects originating in our bodies. They constitute an adequate cause, because their effects are clearly distinguishable and perceived. However, unlike passions, actions are rare. Moreover, because of humans' finite mode of existence, it is impossible to fulfil their requirement for exhausted knowledge. Full understanding is a characteristic belonging only to God, Nature or Substance – Spinoza treats all three interchangeably. However, as I elaborated in the previous section, we can come closer to gaining adequate knowledge by initiating and multiplying our encounters with bodies.

When bodies in relation agree with each other, when bodies agree with their *conatus* (agree with their drive to life), they construct a third relation that preserves both their *conatûs*, [*Ethics*, IV, P31, P38, P39]. These encounters can be called good affects. Despite being passive and thus constructing inadequate knowledge, they positively influence one's well-being, because they preserve, rather than destroy body. These are the passions that Spinoza calls joy.[62] Even if Spinoza considers passions to generally diminish our power to act, the passions of joy involve some degree of action. The joyful passions preserve our drive to life and therefore increase our power to act. In this account, when passions agree with our conatus, they produce joy, increase our power, or even encourage us to prolong this relation. Thus, our desire comes not from being passive, but comes from our conatus, our drive to increase our power in order to act.[63] When the body in relation cannot be combined with the other, when relations disagree with each other, this is considered to be a bad encounter, in the sense that, rather than preserving a body's conatus, it destroys it or harms it. It thus reduces the body's power to act. Spinoza calls such bad encounters sad passions.

[62] Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin, 1st edition (New York/ Cambridge, MA: Zone Books, 1992), 239.

[63] Ibid., 240.

Encounters between bodies generate intimate and risky relations that may have unequal results for different bodies. Hence, Caccavale's project becomes crucial when looking to understand the implications of affect's relationality. Caccavale created ways of being in an allied relationship with the pig. His visualization of relationality and new ways of practicing it had a partially human perspective – they were driven by passion. Moreover, because the *Utility Pets* served more humans than the pig, and the preservation of human life presupposed the death of another animal life, the relationality that we encounter in this case oscillates around sad passion for the pig and semi-joyful passion for the human – prolonging life, yet not without the human feeling a sense of remorse and loss. The intensity of this vibration between joy and sadness is undoubtedly fostered by the blurred boundary between the two species. Nevertheless, this human-pig asymmetrical relation generates a unique way of life that transforms what both a pig's and a human's body might do. The *Utility Pets* literally feed on the dynamic and blur the distinction between actions and passion, and the necessity to explore multiple, complex, awkward and "weirding" relationality in order to understand what it would be like – that is to say, what the implications are of blurring the boundary between species – to practice animal relationality.

The practice of relations between pig and human in Caccavale's speculative project, albeit from only one, human, perspective and with a fatal ending for the pig, produced a mutual alliance that enriched both lives – this is what Spinoza would call joyful passion. Even though it may only be partial (because it does not result in full knowledge about its cause and it ends with the death of one of the bodies), the human-pig relation produces new experiences. By mapping of these multiple relations, Caccavale creates new understanding about what human-pig bodies may do and how they might co-exist. Spinoza would have considered both of the passive encounters in this case to have been carefully studied, regardless of their relation to the degree of power. The very act of comprehending passions, regardless of whether they are sad or joyful, leads us to knowledge of their causes, which, eventually, transform our passivity into activity. Neither joyful, nor sad relations are fixed and given, and each encounter, due to its dynamic and transformative character, constantly shifts and transforms not only the bodies, but the relations themselves.

Moreover, Spinoza's clear distinction between sad and joyful passions does not mean that they are inherently separate. Joyful and sad passions constantly intermingle.[64] This is due to the fact that we are partially and particularly involved in relations that determine our bodies and actions. Our existence is affected by other bodies, and is already accommodated by them.[65] Most importantly, as Deleuze concludes, there is no opposition or essential dualism between passive and active affects. We can increase our power through joyful passion, but, simultaneously, sad passion can block this increase; despite this, the latter still exercises the power to act, albeit in the lowest degree. We can reinforce our activity of knowing by multiplying relations. Only through encounter can we understand which bodies agree with

[64] Ibid., 244.

[65] Ibid.

each other or not and what their capacities and functions are. In this sense, Spinoza outlines what the notion of transformation through affect might be. As Genevieve Lloyd puts it:

> Through understanding the affects, replacing the inadequate ideas they initially involve with more adequate ones, we do not simply retreat from the turmoil of passion into a realm of thought. The affect itself is transformed from a passion – an inadequate idea of a transition to a greater or lesser state of activity – to an active rational emotion, incorporating an adequate idea.[66]

Since to understand the body is to know what the body can do, what are its capacities and functions, knowledge about passion has a transformative character. Importantly, in the encounter that transforms bodies neither body nor mind has a priority: "for what the body can do no one has hithherto determined, that is to say, experience has taught no one hitherto what the body without being determined by mind, can do and what it cannot do from the laws of nature alone, in so far as nature is considered as corporeal,"[67] [Ethics, III, P2 Scholium]. Spinoza considers passions to be the flows of rest and motion that are both mental and corporeal. These 'passive' affects, although they constitute the source of inadequate knowledge, can bring understanding about the cause of things and, consequently, understanding about our bodies. Hence, instead of characterizing the juxtaposition of thinking/mind and affected/body as a problem of how the two can communicate, Spinoza outlines the corresponding nature between mind and body. For Spinoza's contemporary Descartes, for instance, passions, as the passive feelings of a body, were not only opposite to the active mind, but also prone to the mind's control, because they did not reflect Nature's majesty.[68] Spinoza's monism, however, rejected Descartes' dualistic approach on the grounds of ontological egalitarianism and a reciprocal relationality between what was considered mind and body.

The binary relation of body-mind, even though harmonious, presupposes a hierarchical moral order that requires one to surrender for another to succeed. Spinoza breaks the hierarchical order of faculties with his notion of parallelism (which should be read as a unity), because the passions of the body are also the passions of the mind [*Ethics* III, P2 Scholium]. Neither body, nor mind is separate from each other, but rather they are simultaneous. There is thus no harmony based on the dialectical structure of action and passion, thesis and antithesis, joy and sadness. There is no transcendence that allows for action or finality. Instead, Spinoza thinks about relationality in terms of not only the material encounter of bodies and corporeal generation of meaning, but also in terms of an encounter characterized by continuous risk and doubt. To encounter the body means

[66] Genevieve Lloyd, *Part of Nature: Self-Knowledge in Spinoza's Ethics*, 1st edition (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 86.

[67] Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. W.H. White, 101.

[68] Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul.*

generating meaning about this body, without prior knowledge of its full capabilities. The transformative capacity of relationality is thus a creation that regards both incorporeal truth and corporeal body as something that needs to be continuously mapped and experimented with.

We do not know in advance which relations are bad and which might, ultimately, be joyful, i.e. which relations can lead us to action and which can diminish our understanding. We must first create the conditions for a new relationality to emerge. The short analysis of Spinoza's use of affect demonstrates that affect is something to be considered as neutral – something that incorporates bad as well as good encounters, which are never arbitrary, but rather situated. We do not know in advance which encounter will be good or bad; therefore, we must experiment, to see what happens first. Even then, the observation might shift. What for one body appears to be good and joyful, may be destructive for another. Affect implies the continuous process of experimentation and mapping relationality. The understanding of affect as *affectus* inevitably leads to a particular understanding of ethics. Within thinking with *affectus*, ethics becomes the practice of learning how to secure the spaces that allow relationality to occur. This particular understanding of ethics will be explored later (Chapter 5). For now, the last crucial characteristic of affect as *affectus* awaits.

2.4c Affect as expression

Why would someone want to inject another species' blood into their own body? When AOO performed their experiment of becoming with the horse, rather than the struggle to express and represent some given sense of an idea about what the body is, their approach focused on the conditions of that particular practice: how to shake the fixed border between the bodies? The processes of experimentation as encounter that affect embodies focuses on the conditions of creation, on how to secure the spaces that allow relationality and contamination to occur, and how to continue relationality's transformative movements. This different logic, which *affectus* implies, presupposes a search for genesis, for conditions that allow an encounter to have a generative rather than a representative capacity. Affect, as such, constitutes the ontological condition of bodies – expression through relation.

Expression here has a particular meaning, which Deleuze devoted an entire book to when discussing the philosophy of Spinoza.[69] I cannot do justice Deleuze's analysis of expressionism in Spinoza here, so I will focus on a particular element of his analysis, which will help our understanding of affect's distinct sense of relation that not only connects bodies, but also generates transformation of those bodies.

Deleuze characterizes Spinoza's immanent philosophy as the philosophy of expression. On the basis of Spinoza's monistic philosophy, which is based on the presupposition of one substance that is infinitely actualizing itself, all that is, is an expression of that substance. In

[69] Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy.*

addition to the concept of Substance, Spinoza distinguished modes and attributes. For our purpose, i.e. understanding the generative character of affect, it is important to consider how Deleuze explains those modes and attributes, since scholars are not definite in this matter and fail to take into account the generative capacity of affect.[70]

Deleuze clarifies Spinoza's differentiation of *propria* (modes) and attributes as a relation between these adjectives that which give no substantial knowledge, and verbs that express qualities and essences.[71] *Propria* thus belong to the structure of sign and signified, while attributes to expression and expressed: "A sign always attaches to a proprium; it always signifies a commandment; and it grounds our obedience towards it. Expression always relates to an attribute; it expresses an essence, that is, a nature in the infinitive; it makes it known to us."[72] Deleuze describes the expressive character of attributes as affirmative. Affirmation means that attributes do not need the logic of identification in their relation of expression. Identification is based on negativity and opposition – in order for something to be perceived you must use the logic of comparison, based on what it is not.[73] As Deleuze explains, attributes express rather the essence of substance in a way that constitutes substance growth and dynamic nature.[74] Nevertheless, the notion of expression as an indication of transformation becomes more apparent for our purpose when we consider how Deleuze distinguishes Spinoza's expression from the concept of participation.

Deleuze refers to Plato to outline three meanings of participation: material (to be part of something), imitative (to imitate), and demonic (to receive something from a demon).[75] In all cases, participation was constructed from the perspective of being outside of the relation of participation. That is to say, as observers, we either do not see divisions, or we possess some prior idea or model on account of which we grant imitation.[76] Thus, according to Deleuze, a post-platonic notion of participation is an inversion of Plato's perspective, i.e. a shift from an outside perspective to an inside one. This inside perspective on participation

[70] See the extensive analysis of the difference between Deleuze reading of Spinoza's expressionism and the usual reading through the philosophy of Hegel and Descartes: Simon Duffy, *The Logic of Expression: Quality, Quantity and Intensity in Spinoza, Hegel and Deleuze,* (Aldershot/ Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2006).

[71] Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy*, 50–55.

[72] Ibid., 57.

[73] Ibid., 60.

[74] Ibid., 80–81; On the analysis of the univocity of the Substance and attributes, of what is universal and singular or what Spinoza also calls *natura naturans* (Nature, Substance, God) and *natura naturata* (nature, modes, bodies) see Audrey Wasser, "Deleuze's Expressionism," *Angelaki* 12, no. 2 (1 August 2007): 49–66; Using Deleuze's concept of difference, Wasser elaborates on the transformative capacity of the expressionism and the capacity of immanence to generate the new while avoiding determinacy; for the further study of the expression that is determined by difference see Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 40–41.

[75] Deleuze refers here to Plato's notion of a demon, which Plato described as a demiurge, creator, craftsman of the universe, see Plato, *Timaeus and Critias*, trans. Robin Waterfield, 1st edition (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[76] Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy*, 169.

focuses on genesis or production. It is a triad of giver, given and recipient, which Plotinus called an emanation: "To participate is always to participate through what is given."[77]

When we look at participation from an outside perspective and with regard to Spinoza's understanding of expression, it fails to meet the requirement of immanence. Hence, emanation, rather than participation, seems to be logically much closer to immanence. When defined causally, as Deleuze does, within emanation there is a production of which causes remain in themselves. The difference between emanation and expression lies, however, in the way both "systems" produce things. In immanence, cause and effect remain in themselves. In emanation, although the cause is immanent, the effect transcends its causes: "The emanative cause produces through what it gives, but is beyond what it gives."[78] There is inscribed exclusion in emanation and, as Deleuze argues, it contradicts the affirmative nature of immanence. Emanation presupposes the exclusion and hierarchical superiority of its effects.

The exclusion of participation and emanation when thinking about expressionism leads Deleuze to the final characterization of expression as immanence. The notion of expression presupposes unity as a property of substance – an equality of being that implies no hierarchical structures. From such characteristics of expression, which generates but also transforms bodies, the sense of relationality appears to be messy, full of surprises and risks. Relationality demands a constant negotiation and experimentation.

The significance of Spinoza's philosophy, according to Deleuze, lies in the immanence that releases expression from representation and subordination. As such, it equates being with knowing, which Deleuze calls expressive knowledge.[79] Therefore, in his introduction to the third part of *Ethics*, Spinoza writes that we should not "bewail, laugh at, mock, or, as is more generally the case, detest"[80] affects; rather, through its study, we can truly possess an understanding of them. Thus, the concept of affect as *affectus* becomes, for Spinoza, an attuned relational way of gathering and forming bodies. He combines and relates his understanding of affect with a sense of agency, causality and knowledge about bodies,[81] allowing us to consider the material and generative implications of relationality, where to know is to materially participate in something.

This material participation in bodies' relationality and transformation pervades the work of AOO and Caccavale discussed in this chapter. AOO and Caccavale were already working with affect, yet in a non-specified, non-defined way. They were creating spaces of encounter, of relationality, to create a sort of experimentation, to test what bodies can do, even without us, other participants, knowing about it. It might, therefore, be argued that the

[77] Ibid., 171.

[78] Ibid., 172.

[79] Ibid., 183.

[80] Spinoza, *Ethics,* trans. W.H. White, 97.

[81] The third chapter of this book is devoted to the material notion of meaning that affect implies.

whole philosophical clarification of affect and its importance is meaningless in the face of more tangible artistic endeavours that directly experience relationality.

However, such a conclusion of priority of practice over theory immediately positions me in the dualism of faculties and experience that the relationality of affect undermines. To practice affect is also to change the way of thinking about affect, about bodies and the relations it transforms and generates. Without bioart encounters, we would not have created and experienced the intensity of animal relationality as exercised by AOO and Caccavale. But without Spinoza's *affectus*, I would not have been able to point to and formulate that experience either. Affect as *affectus* implies immanence of thought and practice, but also their mutual and constant negotiation. To live within affect, to practice bodies within affect, demands the shaping and securing of spaces that facilitate such negotiations and experimentation.

The animality of affect can be understood through actual participation, an alliance with a mutating body, with its movements, flows and messiness and openness to continuous transformation and rethinking of ways to achieve this. However, beware, one never stays the same after engaging in such contaminating relations – one transforms and mutates expressing the relationality of continuous contaminations.

2.5 Facing Critique of Affect

Despite the Spinoza-Deleuze perspective on affect as transformative relationality, as previously mentioned, affect has mainly been analysed as *affection* – as a state of a body or an idea of that state, such as an emotion.[82] The importance of affect for a wider understanding of how bodies relate and what this relation might be, has frequently been subordinated to the psychological study of emotions. As *affectio*, the study of affect survived mostly along the lines of Cartesian argumentation, in which, given its presumed subjectivity, affect is considered to necessitate repression or control by the mind for the sake of the validity of knowledge.[83] Moreover, a significant criticism of affect has emerged, which has mapped a particular form of its development. This lack of differentiation between affect and emotion undermines and questions the possible implementation of affect within humanistic theory, which is concerned with the wide cultural, political and social implications of bodies' relationality.

[82] See the multiple takes on affect, which, although they acknowledge existing discourses on differentiations, tend not to distinguish between affect, emotion, feeling and pre-cognitive response: Charles Altieri, *The Particulars of Rapture: An Aesthetics of the Affects* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); Teresa Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2002); Sianne Ngai, Ugly Feelings (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

[83] For a critical analysis of the 'affective turn' in philosophy see Marguerite La Caze and Henry Martyn Lloyd, "Editors' Introduction: Philosophy and Affective Turn," *Parrhesia* 13 (2011): 1–13.

The inability to distinguish between relations of transformations and those that strengthen ideas of identification tends not only to perpetuate old hierarchies between bodies, but also leads to the critique of any attempt to express and prolong its transformations. For this reason, Shannon Bell, when writing about the Paul Virilio concept of extreme art, compared the performance of, among other works of bioart, "May the Horse Live in Me," to the "manifestations of the accident of art […] [that] came into being as a response to war and to its spectacle of terror and shock value, which has only increased in speed and intensity."[84] Considering Virilio, who defines art's relationship to science as "the expressionism of a MONSTER, born of the labour of a science deliberately deprived of a conscience […]not a literary or artistic genius anymore, but a GENETIC GENIUS,"[85] bioart, in particular, appears as the spectacle of fear before the monster. Once defined as a deviation from something, as the idea of fear, affect as relations of transformations becomes neglected and caricaturized as a mere spectacle of curiosity, deviation from norm, from that which is considered to be fixed. As Virilio cries:

> the hybridization of man and animal. How can we fail to see that these 'scientific extremists,' far from merely threatening the unicity of the human race by trafficking embryos, are also taking their axe to the whole philosophical and physiological panoply that previously gave the term SCIENCE its very meaning?[86]

Moreover, the main argument against the use of the concept of affect presupposes the necessity of maintaining not merely bodily-species "purity", but also, fixed disciplinary divisions. Arguments against the use of affect revolve around the alleged appropriation of neuroscientific findings for humanistic aims and research. In the struggle to find some communication between science and the humanities, Constantina Papoulias and Felicity Callard suggest that affect is a part of what they call a "spontaneous philosophy." "Spontaneous," in this sense, implies a simplification of complex neuroscientific theories in order to ensure the significance and actuality of one's theoretical claims. The difference in the understanding and use of affect between disciplines is often thought to create more problems than it solves. For instance, in neurobiology and developmental psychology, affect is studied as a part of a regulatory system that assures the formation of coherent relations between individuals. When affect is used as "a placeholder for the inherent dynamic and

[84] Shannon Bell, "Accident of Art," in *The Virilio Dictionary*, ed. John Armitage, 1st edition (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 21.

[85] Paul Virilio, *Art and Fear*, trans. Julie Rose (London, New York: Continuum, 2004), 50; capitalization in original.

[86] Ibid., 51.

mutability of matter"[87] in philosophical and cultural analysis, it is said to significantly contradict science.[88]

However, within the concerns of this book and the relational matters of affect already discussed in this chapter, it is necessary to confront the critique of affect that draws upon Spinoza-Deleuze readings.[89] Under particular scrutiny is Brian Massumi, who actualizes Deleuze's philosophy in his *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*, already a canonical text for the affective turn.[90] Perhaps the most significant argument against Massumi's notion of affect is his idea of the autonomy of affect and his appropriation of science in understanding this autonomy. Before moving to particular arguments, it is necessary to examine Massumi's reading of affect more closely.

Following Massumi's description, within cultural theory, affect introduces the notion of intensity to encounters between bodies. In his concept of the autonomy of affect, he tries to overcome the dominion of structures based on discourses that firmly rely on qualified identities, points of reference and representations. He develops an understanding of affect as an intensive expression-experience-based event.[91] In this sense, he follows Spinoza-Deleuze's use of affect as affectus. Here, affect is translated and used as a passage between states, in contrast to the psychological use of affect as affectio – as a state of bodies' fixed disposition, such as emotion or feeling. For Massumi, affect as affectus is autonomous from the states of bodies, thus from affection. Affect's autonomy is not just a methodological call to overcome the discursive and linguistic methodology of "cultural-theoretical vocabulary," dominated by the theories of signification, characteristic of the notion of *affectio*.[92] Most of all, Massumi argues for a way of thinking and acting that is independent from linguistic signification. When he writes about the autonomy of affect as an openness to relations and as a dissimilation of function, he refers to the a-signification of affect, a concept introduced by Deleuze and Guattari.[93] A-signification of affect means that affect does not carry meaning or function, but it is not entirely excluded from any semiotic characteristic either. Rather,

[87] Constantina Papoulias and Felicity Callard, "Biology's Gift: Interrogating the Turn to Affect," *Body & Society* 16, no. 1 (2010): 31.

[88] Ibid., 39.

[89] Eugenie Brinkema, for instance, argues that the signification of affect within Deleuzian studies is too general and thus empty: "Deleuzians, with their emphasis on affect as a pure state of potentiality, tend to be particularly guilty of the sin of generality. This terminological lump risks the vagueness of purely negative definitional endeavors and largely cedes specificity—generic, emotional, historical—to cognitivists in literary and media studies, who have taken Aristotelian taxonomizing to heart in their ever-narrowing treatment […] When affect is taken as a synonym for violence or force (or intensity or sensation), one can only speak of its most abstract agitations instead of any particular textual workings. Thus, the turn to affect has tended to make the same argument time and again—each a version of, "We urgently have to attend to X!" where X stands for a member of the set {excess, affect, sensation, embodiment, intensity, resistance, whatever}" in *The Forms of the Affects* (Durham, NC/London: Duke University Press Books, 2014), xviii.

[90] Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2002).

[91] Ibid., 27–28.

[92] Ibid., 27.

[93] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 75–78.

as creative and spontaneous, and having the capacity for transformation and change, affect generates new, non-linguistic meanings[94] that are not supported by a regime of cognitive semiotics grounded in the signifier/signified paradigm.[95]

Nevertheless, because of the characterization of affect as an encounter and experience, Clare Hemmings claims that Massumi's concept of affect is unable to confront social and political criticism.[96] Using Simon O'Sullivan's words, she argues that when you take seriously the idea that "you cannot read affects, you can only experience them,"[97] affect dissolves any critical, political and cultural potential for scrutiny. When affect can only be experienced and not be identified, it remains outside meaningful discourse.[98] We can conclude from such a claim, however, that any phenomenon that functions in the non-linguistic realm of experience is prone to socio-cultural meaninglessness. The problematic of such a conclusion is blatantly clear.

Ruth Leys similarly criticizes the presumed non-signification of affect due to its non-identifiable character. She draws consequences from Massumi's characterization of affect such as the automatic response that happens before consciousness as well as a sense of intentionality.[99] According to Leys, such a notion of affect renders one's existence as a barely reactive activity, cut off from complex socio-political contexts. Affect, when deprived of meaning, presupposes neuro-essentalism and a correlationist fixation on the subject's perception and perspective. Moreover, when affect is understood as an encounter that happens outside semiotic structures, it leads to the presupposition that we can think about meaning formation and generation only as a product of reflection and cognition, reinforcing, in turn, the old body-mind dualism.

Since Massumi wants to overcome the representational understanding of bodies by presupposing the non-reflexive and non-intentional notion of affect that generates bodies. He certainly appears to be close to strengthening dualism between body and mind. Affect, understood in terms of an automatic reaction of the body taking place below the threshold of consciousness, implies a radical break by the body with any sense of creativity and meaningful production. Here, therefore, Massumi would demonstrate that only the mind has a capacity for cognition and intention and that meaning occurs independently from the body's re-action.[100]

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[94] Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*, 35; See also Agnieszka Anna Wołodźko, "Materiality of Affect: How Art Can Reveal the More Subtle Realities of an Encounter," in *This Deleuzian Century*, (eds) Rick Dolphijn and Rosi Braidotti (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 171–173.

[95] Stephen Zepke, *Art as Abstract Machine: Ontology and Aesthetics in Deleuze and Guattari* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 121.

[96] Clare Hemmings, "Invoking Affect: Cultural Theory and the Ontological Turn," *Cultural Studies* 19, no. 5 (2005): 562-563

[97] Simon O'Sullivan, "The Aesthetics of Affect: Thinking Art Beyond Representation," *Angelaki: Journal of Theoretical Humanities* 6, no. 3 (2001): 126.

[98] Hemmings, "Invoking Affect," 563.

[99] Ruth Leys, "The Turn to Affect: A Critique," Critical Inquiry 37, no. 3 (1 maart 2011): 450–451.

[100] Ibid., 456.

However, Massumi's understanding of affect relies on a differentiation between *affectus* and *affectio*. He reads the notion of affect in the sense of the word *affectus* – i.e. as a passage between bodies that is independent from the given states of bodies and their representation. He acknowledges that affect is not an affection. His understanding of affect presupposes the sense of relationality. Only through this profound understanding of relationality – relationality that draws heavily upon Deleuze's-Spinoza's understanding of the parallelism of body and mind – can he argue for the relational generation of bodies:

> The autonomic tendency received second-hand from the body is raised to a higher power to become an activity of the mind. Mind and body are seen as two levels recapitulating the same image/expression event in different but parallel ways, ascending by degrees from the concrete to the incorporeal, holding to the same absent center of a now spectral – and potentialized – encounter.[101]

In this way, affect allows for a relational understanding of our bodies emerging within an encounter. In the event of an encounter, actions and passions are inseparable. Affect, within which bodies in relation emerge, becomes a middle ground:

> Spinoza's Ethics is the philosophy of becoming-active, in parallel, of mind and body, from an origin in passion, in impingement, in so pure and productive a receptivity that it can only be conceived as a third state, an excluded middle, prior to the distinction between activity and passivity: affect.[102]

As Massumi stresses, the question of affect's potency lies not in the critique, but in the possibility of the new that results from a non-dialectical sense of relationality. His understanding of the autonomy of affect takes the shape of a radical openness to relations, rather than the fixation on a particular set of structures. He thus turns to the problem of genesis as a truly political and cultural issue:

> The stakes are the new. For structure is the place where nothing ever happens, that explanatory heaven in which all eventual permutations are prefigured in a self-consistent set of invariant generative rules. Nothing is prefigured in the event. It is the collapse of structured distinction into intensity, of rules into paradox. It is the suspension of the invariance that makes happy happy, sad sad, function function, and meaning mean.[103]

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[101] Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*, 32.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid., 27.

Even if some of the critical voices are significant, their concerns mostly relate to methodological clarity, which ultimately supports the disciplinary divisions and prioritization of epistemology over ontology. What such evaluations miss, despite their crucial and urgent concern for the specificity of the humanities, is the contaminating condition of affect that blurs any stubbornly posed demand for disciplinary divisions and purity.[104]

Massumi acknowledges his "shameless" reliance on science, and yet he emphasizes the need to pursue this ungrateful endeavour just for the sake of changing the humanities. He calls for reshaping humanistic methods and concepts, in order to find what is unique to the humanities. For him, affect opens a transversal journey where various findings and methods are juxtaposed in order to create transformative encounters: "The point, once again, is not to make the humanities scientific. The point is to borrow from science in order to make a difference in the humanities."[105] Through his close reading of Deleuze-Spinoza, Massumi opens the possibility of relational thinking within cultural and political theory, drawing the possible line not only for the transformative and relational logic of thinking with affect, but also carving the radical implications of affect that this book undertakes – new modulating, mutating, animal understanding of how bodies and their understanding is produced and practiced when art, philosophy and science become continuously intermingling and challenging each other.

Instead of adopting the rhetoric of evidence in theoretical approach, I argue that the point is to change the questions that form the basis of our analysis. This shift in thinking can be established when we change the epistemological inquiry of 'what can I know' into 'what must I do' and 'what can I hope.'[106] Such a shift from epistemology to ethology responds to the Deleuzian-Spinozian notion of affect as a relation and a passage. Here, affect becomes a method that is related to existence and action. Consequently, affect becomes a combined object and practice, where each of its components cannot be separated from each other.

Accordingly, while I agree with the arguments against the appropriation of psychological and neuroscientific facts in philosophical research, there has been a convenient omission of the relational and processual understanding of affect long before any of the mentioned branches of 'hard science' were established. However, simplification threatens to immobilize all that affect promises to carry. The fierce debate around the nature of affect and why it has become so important today influences its actual and conceptual practice. In contrast to this theoretical dialogue, I argue that bioart's relational practice with contaminating materialities of bodies allows us to confront affect, where passions are inseparable from actions. Bioart's experimental approach to the body offers a fresh and yet strangely familiar perspective on

[104] Papoulias and Callard, "Biology's Gift," 46–49.

[105] Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*, 20–21.

[106] Alain Badiou, "Preface" in Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*, trans. Ray Brassier (London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010), vii.

how affect as relation is possible in practice. Bioart generates actual consequences of its practices for thinking about bodies.

After all, Deleuze and Guattari already wrote on art's distinct potentiality for the generation of affects and percepts.[107] The question that bioart highlights, however, seems to be the result of a serious account of what Deleuze and Guattari signalled. It is the question that Spinoza asked and which, although urgent, remains unanswered and somehow lost in today's discussion on affect: how to act when we take seriously the *affectus* that generates our bodies? Today, this Spinozian understanding of agencies that collectively construct bodies and their multiple meanings marks the line of thinking and practice of affect that actually matters. Unlike in any other encounter, the actual consequences and implications of this relationality are exercised in artistic practice. Within bioart's practice, a radical shift in thinking happens, which means that rather than focusing on finding truths, on defining states of things, we are more concerned with genesis, conditions of creation and their implications.

2.6 Fabulations of Affect

Fabulate, v. …to relate as a fable or myth…
To talk or narrate in fables...
To invent, concoct, fabricate.[108]

Affect deviates, induces change and contaminations and, as such, it becomes the creative capacity, albeit not without the risk of encountering the unknown and unpredictable. The creative capacity of affect as exercised in the discussed work of AOO and Caccavale, oscillates not between fiction and reality, between imagined and given, but, as Deleuze would say, "in the new mode of story."[109] This new mode of story, as later described by Deleuze and Guattari, is a "creative fabulation,"[110] that "exists only from the perspective of a series of powers, always referring to each other and passing into one another."[111] This creative fabulation of affect does not belong to memory;[112] as Deleuze argues, it does not follow the structure of identity, but rather that which is yet to come – the relations of transformations.

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[107] Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 163–169.

[108] "Fabulate, v.," *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/view/Entry/67410# eid4920006, accessed 11 May 2017.

[109] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minesota Press, 1989), 155.

[110] Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 171.

[111] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, 139.

[112] Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 168–71; *Deleuze, Cinema II*, 131–42.

The particular relationality of fabulation, of relations that, rather than connect to what is already there, stretch out to shape new bodies, to create new paths, thus has an aesthetic dimension. Affect creates new sensations and new perceptions. To fabulate is to create. There is, however, something distinct that affect engenders when read with Spinoza and Deleuze, and as practiced within bioart. It can be argued, nevertheless, that we do not need a new concept of relationality when talking about art's practice, because we already have that in art theory. In particular, Nicolas Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics* (1998) opened a crucial discussion on the role of art as generation and production of meaning that allows us to think about relationality in art more clearly. I argue, however, that affect as practiced by bioart offers distinct implications for understanding the contamination of bodies that existing theories within art cannot grasp alone. Bourriaud's idea of relationality has been important not only for the analysis of art in the 1990s, but also for recognizing the line of transformations and challenges that practicing affect with bioart engenders. I will therefore briefly recall the main characteristic of relational aesthetics to further map the distinct and important implications of affect.

Within the phenomenon which he described as the commodification of human relationships into "standardized artefacts,"[113] Bourriaud asked whether it is still possible for art to generate relationships with the world. By following Guy Debord's the *Society of the Spectacle*, he argued for the universal mediation of human relationships through images. However, he did not follow Debord's focus on the individual. Instead, Bourriaud argued that the most important thing "in our post-industrial society" is not the emancipation *of* the individual, but the emancipation *from* the individual: "freeing-up of inter-human communications, the dimensional emancipation of existence."[114] He thus claimed that there is a possibility of art becoming relational when it takes "as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and private symbolic space."[115] He defined art as a state of encounter. For him, art generates a form from random encounters that must be lasting in order to, like glue, hold together a particular composition of relations.[116]

However, art understood in terms of relational aesthetics, as outlined by Bourriaud, renders the work of art merely a medium that facilitates relations that can only occur between humans, i.e. artists and spectators: "The artist's practice, and his behaviour as producer, determines the relationship that will be struck up with his work. In other words, what he produces, first and foremost, is relations between people and the world, by way of aesthetic objects."[117] As such, the concept of relational aesthetics was criticized by the

[113] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods (Les Presse Du Reel, 2002), 9.

[114] Ibid., 60.

[115] Ibid., 14.

[116] Ibid., 19–20.

[117] Ibid., 42.

art historian Claire Bishop for its intentional notion of relation and interaction. Relational aesthetics renders art not only contextually dependent, but also intentionally reliant. In this way, it comes close to representation – relational aesthetics thus lacks the generative potential that it aspires to. Rather than transformation, it not only presupposes art's fixed aim and role, it also assumes unified subjects. Such a reading of relational aesthetics is possible, since, as Bishop argues, the idea of what is subject and how it acts is based on a shared notion of identity, ready to fulfil the artist's intention.[118]

Bishop proposes her own notion of relationality as practiced within art, which she formulates as participation. She writes about reflection embedded in the act of encounter. As she argues, when encountering the work of art, the process of thinking, activated by making things present and available to awareness, is more important than the actual act of fulfilling the intention of the artist. In that sense, the notion of agency is shifted to the spectator and the work itself.[119] By characterizing the art work as a project, the artist as collaborator, and the viewer as participant, Bishop maps art as autonomous. Autonomy of art should be understood here in terms of art's capacity to generate and construct, rather than represent, meaning, which, in turn, endows the work of art with political influence. The notion of autonomy is not based on its radical distance from the context, society, politics or ethics. It recalls the autonomy of Massumi's affect, which rather than reflect, shifts and transforms meanings.

The particular understanding of the fabulations of affect are clearly present, albeit slightly mutated, in this brief, art theoretical analysis of relationality. In their practice, the bioartists attentively exercise what Deleuze mapped as the intensive notion of the non-essentialist materiality of the body, emergent and pulsating. This means that instead of asking *what* the body *is*, bioartists practice rather *what* it *does*. Through the non-teleological methodology of experimentation, they focus our attention on the dynamic capacities of "living" matter. It is crucial that this materialist vital force of the body generates dynamic and risky encounters. The performance by *Art Orienté Objet* was a balance between a harmful and an enriching experience. It demanded a careful, long preparation and adjustments so that the artist's body could become accustomed to being affected in order that she be open for a radically different and transforming material intervention.[120]

In this way, bioart can be seen as belonging to the participatory art mapped by Bishop, since it shares some of its characteristics. For example, it shares the use of the rhetoric of presence and agency, and its use of living tissue materials, with participatory art.[121] Here, the

[118] Cf. full argumentation against the notion of Bourriaud's relational aesthetics by Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *OCTOBER* Fall 2004, vol.110, 51–80.

[119] Ibid., 79.

[120] Agnieszka Anna Wołodźko "Between Bio(s) and Art – Intensities of Matter in Bioart," in *Innen – Außen – Anders: Körper im Werk von Gilles Deleuze und Michel Foucault*, (eds) Ann-Cathrin Drews and Katharina D. Martin, Edition Moderne Postmoderne (Publisher, Transcript Verlag, 2017), 221-236

[121] See Joseph Dumit, "Foreword:Biological Feedback," in *Tactical Biopolitics: Art, Activism, and Technoscience* (eds) Beatriz da Costa and Kavita Philip (Cambridge, MA/London: The MIT Press, 2010) xii-xiv; Hans Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey*, 1st edition (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

artists are also collaborators with various scientific institutes and communities. Moreover, due to its vital character, the object of art becomes rather a long-term project. Finally, as in participatory art, the beholder is no longer just a viewer, but becomes a participant.[122] However, unlike the participatory art that makes human entities the main subjects, bioart focuses on the notion of the materiality of the body and life as the subject rather than the object of inquiry. Its autonomy is thus forged upon its focus on the ontological status of bodies outside the organic and species division, and within relational schemes.[123] The sense of participation presupposes an immanent nature of relationality as mapped by Spinoza-Deleuze. This means that relationality not only generates those bodies, but also that bodies themselves produce new relations, creative fabulations.

The relationality of affect transforms and demands a transformative sense of narrating such an encounter, one that operates within fictions or fabulations, rather than within the boundaries of aesthetics. Ranciére defines aesthetics as the regime of the sensory, the distributions of sensations "that create specific forms of 'commonsense.'"[124] Aesthetics as such functions according to the logic of the state of things; it is concerned with the properties of things, ascribed fixed interpretations and relations. If we are to think within affect as relations of transformation, we need a different approach to the sensory, one that is already practiced in the AOO performance, which captures and facilitates the movement of transformations while transforming.

In its search for the conditions of creation and relations of transformations, the AOO performance, rather than facilitating interactions between human and non-human, facilitates bodies in their relationality. This notion of relationality that is embedded in the discussed performance signals the dynamic and processual understanding of the body – the body that is generated within relations. Here, the notion of Spinoza-Deleuze's affect becomes the creative fabulation of mutating bodies, impossible to capture and yet there, fabulating and inventing the continuous movement of contaminations.

Bioartists' experimental approach reveals that "the exercise of thought comes primarily through its incorporation."[125] In order to know the body, you must first experiment with what it can do, whether there are boundaries and how these boundaries, or lack of them, have any other implications. In this way, the notion of affect opens a route to direct contact of meaning with matter. As a sign that does not circulate within the representational system of signifiers, but rather emerges as an assemblage of bodies within encounter, affect "puts the sign back into contact with the material and vital plane of consistency that constitutes

[122] Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship,* (London/New York: Verso, 2012), 2.

[123] See a further elaboration of this argument in Agnieszka Anna Wołodźko, "Against Nature – Against the Body? Ecocritical Role of Bioart," in *Creative Expression and the 21st Century Education*, (eds) Małgorzata Suświłło and Adam Grabowski (Olsztyn: UWM, 2015), 65-79.

[124] Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. Steven Corcoran, (London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010), 149.

[125] Marion Laval-Jeantet, "SELF-ANIMALITY," text,http://art-science.univ-paris1.fr/plastik, http://art-science.univ-paris1.fr/plastik/document.php?id=559, accessed 3 June 2011.

it."[126] In this way, affect redefines the encounter between bodies, revealing the dimensions of an event. By thinking in terms of affect, meaning appears not as given for interpretation, but rather as something created during the encounter. What is meaning and how affect, in its relationality and opposition to the signifying nature of affection, can be considered as a sign that is inseparable from matter, and primarily, how such material understanding of bodies can be practiced, is the subject of the next chapter.

[126] Zepke, *Art as Abstract Machine*, 121.