Bridging the Affective Gap

An Affective Transversal Analysis of the Paradigmatic Form of Intensification

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Date:	May 24th, 2024

Thesis for obtaining a "Master of arts" degree in Philosophy

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I hereby declare and assure that I, Max Schmermbeck, have drafted this thesis independently, that no other sources and/or means other than those mentioned have been used and that the passages of which the text content or meaning originates in other works – including electronic media – have been identified and the sources clearly stated. Place: Nijmegen. Date: May 24th, 2024.

Abstract

Contemporary scholarship on affect lacks consensus on what the concept specifically means or in what domain it should be studied. Certain scholars stress that affects are material in nature, whereas others argue that they arise out of abstract processes. I argue that both viewpoints are limited in understanding the complexities of contemporary reality. Consequently, I argue for an expanded framework of affective inquiry which integrates both materialist and 'abstract' approaches into a broader and more coherent framework. The primary focus of this framework is bringing into view if – and how - affective entities display paradigmatic behaviours in relation to specific processes. I do so through the notion of 'affective transversality,' which brings forth how heterogeneously composed interfaces display a paradigmatic form of behaviour in relation to the process of intensification. This analysis serves as an example of how the tools in the toolbox of affective inquiry can be expanded to cover more objects, entities, processes and ontological registers in the analysis of reality.

Introduction

In his philosophical masterwork *Ethics* (1677), Baruch Spinoza provides what has undoubtably become the most influential definition of affect to date: "By affect I understand affections of the body by which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections."[1] This approach to affect and embodiment continues to play a seminal role in the 'affective turn' that emerged in scholarship across the humanities, social sciences and neurosciences in the 1990s due to the fact that it creates conceptual space for scholars to investigate the world in new ways. Rather than solely focus on concepts such as language, discourse or culture in the analysis of reality, thinking in terms of affect allows scholars across a wide range of disciplines to trace the ever-changing array of relations, connections, powers, dynamisms and processes that occur between bodies amidst the material interfaces of the world. The reason for this, is that there is no *a priori* demarcation in the notion of affect which limits the range of entities that might be capable of influencing a being's capacities to act. As such, the entanglements between entities which affect seeks to describe span across a variety of registers, ranging from language and culture to biology and chemistry.[2]

Despite its enormous influence, Spinoza's definition of affect also raises a number of questions, particularly in relation to a metaphysical problem concerning abstraction and materiality.[3] It posits that reality (and the place of (non)-human entities in it) is not solely composed of embodied affects, but it is also not completely abstract, rational or ideal either. Rather, Spinoza links affect to an increase or decrease in a body's power of acting *together with the ideas of these affections.* But what does it mean to have an 'idea' of the affections of a body? Or, to phrase this problem in more general terms: how do the domains of materiality and abstraction relate to each other on a metaphysical level when it comes to affect?

This tension remains unresolved in contemporary scholarship on affect and plays out in various 'dialects' which give primacy to certain processes and entities over others in their understanding of the concept.[4] On the one hand, scholars working at the intersection of affect theory and materialism such as Jane Bennett pursue a materialist reading of Spinoza and argue that affects are strictly material in nature. As she writes in her influential work *Vibrant Matter* (2010): "I equate affect with materiality, rather than posit a separate force that can enter and animate a physical body."[5] Other scholars working within Marxist and Deleuzo-Guattarian frameworks such as Jason Read approach affect in relation to subjectivity and abstract processes, arguing that "affect must be thought of as anti-individualistic rather than individualistic, as social

[1] Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. W. H. White (London: Wordsworth Editions, 2001), III, Def. 3.
[2] Patricia T. Clough, "The Affective Turn: Political Economy, Biomedia, and Bodies," essay, in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Duke University Press, 2010), 206–207.
[3] It should be noted that this goes for Spinoza's definition of affect as it applied in contemporary debates without the various concepts to which the term is connected in his philosophical system, such as mode and substance. There are scholarly disagreements in Spinoza studies on how to correctly interpret his notion of affect, but this is not the main focus of this article. Rather, I take the two dimensions of affect which Spinoza offers (abstraction and materiality) as an underlying problematic to highlight the various tensions currently circulating the field of affect scholarship.
[4] I take the term 'dialect' from Donovan Schaefer's comprehensive historical study of affect theory.
[5] Jane Bennett, "Preface," preface, in *Vibrant Matter* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), xiii.

rather than intimate, and as impersonal, *reflecting the abstractions that dominate life*" (emphasis added).[6] In this perspective, affects should not (primarily) be studied on the level of a material body, but in relation to the desires and abstractions (which can be seen as contemporary versions to the *ideal* component of Spinoza's definition of affect) that circulate within any given social formation to ensure its continuity and consistency. This insight is echoed by Deleuzean scholars Sjoerd van Tuinen and Ceceil Meiborg, who argue that affects such as joy, cynicism, hope, anger, despair, shame and disgust create an "affective infrastructure of the *socius* of contemporary capitalism"[7] which produces a form of modern subjectivity affectively attuned to – and actively desiring – life under our current socio-economic system.[8]

The tension between these various dialects stands at the core of this article, but my aim is not to resolve it by concluding that affects should (primarily) be conceptualized in either a material or an abstract ('ideal') register. Rather, my aim is to show that affect is such a valuable theoretical tool because it allows us to analyse powers, relations, encounters, forces, forms, interfaces and environments in a world in which natural and material processes have become so intimately connected with culture, economics, digitalisation, labour, information networks, media and technology that a rigid separation between abstraction and materiality is either very difficult or outright impossible. Consequently, I argue that we can only adequately understand and evaluate the ways in which affects shape reality if we relate affective materiality to abstract processes, norms and ideas, and vice versa. To phrase this point in more general terms, if we follow affect scholar Marjolein Oele in asking how "an account of affectivity articulates the immanent unfolding of form and meaning through matter,"[9] we must also ask why a *particular* form appears in a *particular* context and in relation to *particular* abstract processes. As cultural theorist Lawrence Grossberg writes:

> One always has to think relationally, and embrace the very real complexities, even the contradictions, operating not only on the planes of affect as it were, but also in the relations among affect and the other constitutive planes/vectors of human (together with non-human) life. *This means that one cannot take any singular affective statement, event, strategy or formation as given in its own singularity or specificity, by itself as it were, outside of the multiplicities and scales of their contexts* (emphasis added).[10]

In this article, I seek to conceptualize affect within a specific multiplicity and scale of its context through an analysis composed of seven sections. First, I briefly outline the central theoretical commitments of a selection of thinkers who either equate affect with materiality or strongly emphasize the primacy of materiality in affective processes. Then, I offer the opposite perspective by mapping those accounts of affect in which abstract processes, structures and ideas take primacy. I conclude this first part of my analysis by

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[6] Jason Read, "The Affective Economy: Producing and Consuming Affects in Deleuze and Guattari," essay, in *The Production of Subjectivity: Marx and Philosophy* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2023), 169.
[7] Sjoerd van Tuinen and Ceceil Meiborg, "Introduction," introduction, in *Deleuze and the Passions* (Brooklyn, NY: Punctum Books, 2016), 14.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Marjolein Oele, "Introduction," introduction, in *E-Co-Affectivity Exploring Pathos at Life's Material Interfaces* (New York, New York: State University of New York Press, 2020), 10.
[10] Lawrence Grossberg and Bryan G. Behrenshausen, "Cultural Studies and Deleuze-Guattari, Part 2: From Affect to Conjunctures," *Cultural Studies* 30, no. 6 (May 2016): 1005.

showing how both dialects are limited, arguing for a framework which integrates affect in both a material and an abstract sense (thereby emphasizing its *dual* sense in Spinoza's initial definition).

Following this provisional conclusion, one might still think that material and abstract affects are of a strictly different nature, or that material entities can only affect other material entities and abstractions only create a certain affective context or frame in which material affectivity takes place. Contrary to this, I argue that these two facets of affect continuously interact with each other within heterogeneously composed interfaces. To make my case, I turn to the works of the French philosopher Félix Guattari, whose notion of 'transversality' seeks to move beyond the very opposition between materiality and abstraction by bringing forth how the radical interconnectedness of entities continuously overflows rigid metaphysical boundaries.[11] As he writes: "transversality tends to be realized when maximum communication is brought about between different levels and above all in terms of different directions."[12] Drawing on Guattari's framework, I integrate the notion of transversality with affect to map the dynamic and fluid multiplicity of heterogenous interfaces.[13]

In the final sections of this article, I show how this notion of 'affective transversality' can overcome the limitations of the current situation in which material and abstract perspectives on affect are mostly talking past each other. This framework seeks to trace how material and abstract entities and affects continuously interact, cross and traverse each other within a complex interface which – as a whole – can be characterized by its capacity to affect and be affected. Lastly, I use this framework to analyse the 'process of intensification' across three different interfaces (raving, working, farming) to show how this brings into view a 'paradigmatic form of behaviour' on the level of affect. Drawing an analogy between these seemingly unrelated interfaces through their capacity to affect and be affected, I argue that the process of intensification leads to the emergence of a paradigmatic form consisting of four stages: rising, peaking, falling and exhaustion. I conclude by detailing the upsides and implications of such an affective transversal analysis and offer a preliminary suggestion for further research at the intersection of transversal thought, ecosophy, metaphysics and affect theory.

Two Registers of Affect

The Primacy of the Material

In addition to the aforementioned 'vibrant materialism' pursued by Jane Bennett, many contemporary accounts of affect either explicitly or implicitly draw a link between affect and materiality.[14] A good example

[11] Manolo Antonioli, "What Is Ecosophy?," essay, in *Schizoanalysis and Ecosophy: Reading Deleuze and Guattari*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), 76.
[12] Félix Guattari, *Psychoanalysis and Transversality: Texts and Interviews 1955-1971*, ed. Gilles Deleuze, trans. Ames Hodges (Pasadena: Semiotext(e), 2015), 80.
[13] Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 17.
[14] Due to the ubiquitous use of the term 'affect' in modern scholarship, I cannot possibly mention all the scholars who use it in relation to a materialist paradigm. As such, the quotes I offer in this section are merely used to indicate how

of this is Marjolein Oele's *E-Co-Affectivity* (2020), which seeks to "articulate and unlock the meaning, depth, and complexity of affectivity in living beings, ultimately focusing on the very materiality of the interfaces that co-generate and co-constitute those living beings."[15] On this view, affects are the various forms of qualitative change (growth, sickness, trauma, illness) which occur as beings "become who they are through interaction and reciprocity with that which affects them as mediated by the interface."[16] These sentiments are echoed by Jo Labanyi in her text "Doing Things: Emotion, Affect and Materiality," in which she posits that "affect is the body's response to stimuli at a precognitive and prelinguistic level (…) Affect is, in a way, "matter in motion" since it "moves" the body."[17] Working at the intersection of new materialism and affect theory, Nietzschean scholar Melissa Orlie makes a similar claim, stating that "In [Nietzsche's] view, all of our affects, from the most immediate physical sensations of pleasure and pain to the most refined aesthetic and moral judgments, grow from and change with our *physis*."[18]

The common thread running through these various accounts is that affect(ivity) is a concept which describes the various becomings of material (organic and inorganic) bodies through their active and passive involvement in affective processes. As Oele writes, "my account of affectivity speaks both to the ability to be affected and the ability to affect, and the complex relationship between the two. It recognizes that, on an organic level, living beings become who they are through mutual interaction with, and strategic affective responses to, that which affects them."[19] Moreover, Oele argues that these 'e-co-affective processes' occur at the ontological level and are primary to the ideal elements of reality such as abstraction, form and choice. Or, to be more precise, the latter *emerge out of* the former. As she writes: "instead of a generic discourse on affectivity, the ontology I provide through mapping affective responses can be more flexible and faithful to the uniqueness of each concrete form of affectivity. (…) such a situated discourse can concretely show *how and where* form, abstraction and choice emerge out of affective materiality" (emphasis in the original text).[20] As this quote shows, the complex dynamisms of material processes are taken to create and shape the ideal elements of reality like form, abstraction, and meaning.

Consequently, Oele's e-co-affective framework seeks to "articulate the *immanent unfolding of form and meaning through matter*"[21] (emphasis in the original text), using affect as an analytical tool to inquire into the inner complexities of material interfaces such as skin, bird feathers, placentas and soil.[22] This approach to affect ultimately serves the goal of de-centring the human subject as a free, rational and autonomous being

certain scholars approach the concept in relation to materiality, rather than provide an exhaustive overview of the current state of the art in this particular domain of scholarship. For more of these frameworks, see Massumi (2002); Connolly (2002); Stanley (2017) and Whitney (2018).

[15] Oele, *E-Co-Affectivity,* 7.

[16] Ibid., 4.

[17] Jo Labanyi, "Doing Things: Emotion, Affect, and Materiality," *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 11, no. 3–4 (September 2010): 223–33, https://doi.org/10.1080/14636204.2010.538244, 224-225.

[18] Melissa Orlie, "Impersonal Matter," essay, in *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics,* ed. Samantha Frost and Diana Coole (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 121.

[19] Oele, *E-Co-Affectivity,* 5.

[20] Ibid., 7.

[21] Ibid., 10.

[22] Ibid., 1-15.

over and against the supposed inertia of animals, nature and matter, and stands at the core of a new eco-ethical paradigm. In this paradigm, renewed attention towards the primacy of embodied affectivity across all forms of life is thought to create the necessary theoretical framework for re-thinking human and non-human relations in matters of ecological suffering, exploitation, co-habitation and sustainability.[23]

Jane Bennett's theory adds that centralizing materiality in the study of affect should also have consequences for our approach to politics. Focussing on the body and the affective processes in which it is persistently immersed, Bennett argues for an approach to materiality "that runs alongside and inside humans to see how analyses of political events might change if we gave the force of things more due."[24] One of the changes envisioned by Bennett is that an understanding of human beings as relational entities whose actions, thoughts, feelings and volitions are affected by a myriad of material factors will lead to a more dispersed and multi-layered approach to concepts such as freedom, responsibility and causality. In doing so, she seeks to dismantle the notion of autonomous subjectivity that has stood at the center of Western thought for centuries, developing a 'political ecology of things' which does justice to the entanglements, co-dependencies and relations characteristic of all beings.[25]

The Primacy of the Abstract

Other thinkers in affect theory have a distinctly different focus, analysing how abstract relations of labour, capital, media and technology produce a form of modern subjectivity which is affectively attuned to – and actively desires – life under our current socio-economic system. As Gregory Seigworth and Carolyn Pedwell write in their introduction to *The Affect Theory Reader 2* (2023), these thinkers investigate "how bodies are collectively enlisted, voluntarily and involuntarily, in affective processes of social reproduction, often quite traumatically: to their detriment, their immiseration, their maiming."[26]

One of the most prolific and distinguished thinkers in this dialect is Jason Read, who synthesizes ideas from Spinoza, Karl Marx, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari to study the relations between capitalism, affect, and subjectivity. Read's central goal is to understand and critically evaluate our contemporary socio-economic system through its affective infrastructure, asking how affects actively (re)produce the form of subjectivity (desires, beliefs, habits, moods, and ideas) that the system needs in order to maintain itself. The guiding intuition behind this approach is that the biggest threat to any social order is not an empirical event which occurs in a particular time and place such as war, famine, or drought, *but the failure of that social order to produce the kind of subjectivity that is capable and willing to continue its productive structures*. In other words, the biggest

[23] Oele, *E-Co-Affectivity,* 139 – 164.
[24] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, viii.
[25] Ibid., x.
[26] Gregory J. Seigworth and Carolyn Pedwell, "Introduction: A Shimmer of Inventories," introduction, in *The Affect Theory Reader 2: Worldings, Tensions, Futures* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2023), 42.

threat to capitalism is a situation in which people no longer desire capitalism.[27] Consequently, Read's analysis focusses on the ways in which this desire is produced through affects that emerge out of abstract processes, rather than through a rational set of ideas which people consciously uphold.

The central thread running through this dialect – which shows strong convergences with the works of Oele and Bennett – is that there is no autonomous human subject (or even a human unconscious) apart from the particular relations in which it is embedded and the affects that these relations produce. As Read writes, "subjectivity is secondary to, and unaware of, the process that produces it. (…) we could say that affects, intensities are always situated between the process of individuation, the production and practices that produce and exceed individuation, and its product, the individual."[28] There is a key difference, however, between the affective materialisms discussed above and the affective lineage of Spinoza, Marx, Deleuze and Guattari synthesized by Read. In the former, affects are construed as material and concrete, whereas in the latter, they emerge out of abstract processes and social relations, creating affective ties between subjectivity and (capitalist) society. In other words, Read is not interested in the ontology of affect, but uses the concept as a theoretical tool to study how people are made to desire a life in a given social order, how they attune themselves to it and shape themselves in accordance with it. As he writes:

> If affect is to be the basis of a critical theory of contemporary society it must be radically separated from individualistic accounts of social relations, accounts that have become increasingly pervasive in a neoliberal self-help culture, on the one hand, and attuned to the "real abstractions" of contemporary capitalism, on the other. *Affect must be a way of grasping the abstractions that determine individual and collective life, rather than a retreat into an interior free of them* (emphasis added).[29]

In a certain sense, affect is still related to materiality in Read's model, since he posits that subjectivity is produced through the relations of production within any given society (an intuition he takes from Marx, Deleuze and Guattari). However, as can be discerned form the quote above, Read's central argument is that these relations and processes have themselves become abstract in the epoch of late capitalism (flows of money, intellectual labour, time, information, data). As he writes: "the defining characteristic of capital is not simply the difference between being ruled by individuals or abstractions, but that 'being ruled by abstractions' produces and presupposes its own particular form of subjectivity."[30]

Guided by this idea, Read analyses a myriad of modern phenomena related to affect and subjectivity, such as the role of affects in contemporary labour practices ('finding one's passion in work' as a justification for ever-increasing working hours), how affects work as forms of attunement to the meaninglessness of capital accumulation (cynicism and piety as the affective atmosphere(s) of capitalism, which he takes from

[27] Jason Read, "A Universal History of Contingency: Deleuze and Guattari on the History of Capitalism," essay, in *The Production of Subjectivity: Marx and Philosophy* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2023), 99.
[28] Jason Read, "The Affective Economy," essay, in *Deleuze and the Passions,* ed. Sjoerd van Tuinen and Ceceil Meiborg (Brooklyn, NY: Punctum Books, 2016), 111.
[29] Ibid., 104.
[30] Jason Read, "The Age of Cynicism: Deleuze and Guattari on the Production of Subjectivity in Capitalism," essay, in *The Production of Subjectivity: Marx and Philosophy* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2023), 134.

Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*), and how money functions as a universal object of desire under capitalism (the distortion of labour relations through abstract equivalencies and the attachment of money to desire, which he calls 'the affective reproduction of capital').[31] The overall conclusion which Read draws from these examples is that subjectivity under capitalism is affectively produced through beliefs, desires, habits, imaginations, and ideas circulating profusely within society to the point of a generalized cynicism in which "it is not just the world, but subjectivity, human existence itself, which is reduced to market value."[32]

To illustrate the main theoretical differences between affective materialism and abstraction, let us take a look at the example of work. Drawing on Oele and Bennett's frameworks, one could investigate a specific work-related interface or assemblage by focussing on how a worker ought not to solely be defined in terms of her job description, professional status, or position within an organization. Rather, an affective material inquiry would bring forth how every worker – just like every other entity – is embedded in a network of material relations (artificial lighting, (un)healthy lunches, filtered coffee, (un)comfortable chairs, air quality, temperature, etc) which together influence the worker's capacity to affect and be affected (her energy and concentration levels, fitness, feeling(s), mood(s), and motivation). Conversely, adopting Read's model, one would highlight the ways in which a workplace is organized around certain abstract norms, values, principles and desires to which people affectively attune themselves. Such an analysis would not centralize the relations between bodies amidst their material environments, but would rather bring forth how an organization manages to keep itself running through a variety of abstract ideas by which people are moved and motivated. One can think here of the modern idea that one's work should be one's passion, that work is gratifying, meaningful and virtuous, or that one should continuously grow and develop oneself through one's work. In this model, affects such as joy, happiness, pleasure, envy and cynicism reflect abstract notions of success, merit and personal value, stimulating people to be productive and useful employees.

As this example shows, both frameworks seek to dismantle the idea of the rational, autonomous and free human subject by pointing out how affects shape human beings in a myriad of ways over which they exercise little to no control. However, the conceptualization of what affect is, how it is formed, and the level at which it should primarily be studied diverges so greatly between these accounts that an investigation of the same topic – in this case, work – might lead to very different analyses that occupy different ontological registers. The question, then, is if – and how – these divergent points of focus can be overcome to create a more detailed and comprehensive account of affect.

[31] Jason Read, "The Affective Reproduction of Capital: Two Returns to Spinoza," essay, in *The Affect Theory Reader 2: Worldings, Tensions, Futures*, ed. Gregory J. Seigworth and Carolyn Pedwell (Durham: Duke University Press, 2023), 367 - 368.
[32] Read, "The Age of Cynicism," 139.

Bridging the Affective Gap

As I stated in the introduction, the aim of this article is to show that both approaches to affect stand to benefit from a broader scope of analysis, where the metaphysical relation between materiality and abstraction serves as an underlying problematic. In the first dialect, which studies affect on the level of material entities, questions arise concerning how such bodies interact with abstract processes and ideas. To what extent are affective phenomena like growth, birth, health, illness and trauma strictly material, and in what sense are they embedded in – and shaped by – abstract norms, desires and processes circulating within a given society? Or, to phrase this problem in more general terms: how does the affective production of subjectivity impact the ways in which humans interact with other living beings, their bodies, nature, and the material world?

To further illustrate the relevance of bridging the affective gap, let us take a look at another example: food. Working within a materialist framework, one could investigate the ways in which eating causes a myriad of processes and changes at the affective level; rising or falling energy levels, mood swings, bodily sensations, and so on. All these affects operate through a series of encounters between material bodies, increasing or decreasing our own body's capacity to act along the way. Such a line of inquiry can clearly be discerned in Bennett's work, whose materialism underlies an approach to eating which "includes the negative power to resist or obstruct human projects, but it also includes the more active power to affect and create affects (…) In the eating encounter, all bodies are shown to be but temporary congealments of a materiality that is a process of becoming, is hustle and flow punctuated by sedimentation and substance."[33]

Such an approach, however, does not tell the full story about food and its relation to affects in society. As various scholars point out, practices of eating are often tied to conceptions of lifestyle, identity, beauty, health, and even morality.[34] Affects such as joy, happiness, disgust and pleasure reflect various norms, principles and ideas, designating certain foods and bodies as desirable, healthy and 'good', and others as undesirable, unhealthy and 'bad'. What one eats, how one eats, and how much one eats, relates to fantasies of who one is or wants to be, the images one sees on a daily basis, and the desires that these relations induce. As such, understanding the affective changes that occur in a body through its encounters with certain kinds of food does not entail a full understanding of why a *particular* body undergoes those *particular* changes at a *particular* time and place. This begs the question how the affective infrastructure of a societal formation impacts the relations, encounters and processes that occur between material interfaces such as bodies, nutrients, diets and subjects in practices of eating.[35]

A point of clarification is in order here. In *Vibrant Matter,* Bennett does concede that contextual factors like morality, information, identity and advertisement play a role in modern practices of eating. As

[33] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter,* 49.
[34] Lauren O'Hagan and Göran Eriksson, *Food Marketing and Selling Healthy Lifestyles with Science: Transhistorical Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2024).

such, she does not offer an analysis of food that only looks at the biochemical (that is, material) reactions it causes, but rather at the complex assemblage of American consumption which includes a multiplicity of factors.[36] The reason why invoking her position on eating is still relevant for my analysis, is because her material framework commits her to the position that such abstract factors are somehow beyond or separate from the level of affect. After all, she explicitly "equates affect with materiality, rather than posit a separate force that can enter and animate a physical body."[37] The only logical conclusion from these two positions is that the role of context (morality, marketing, etc) is important, but also somehow non-affective. It is precisely because of tensions like these that I argue for a more expanded framework of affect.

Such a framework can, for example, highlight how the abstract processes and ideas circulating a socio-economic system shape, organize and distort material practices such as eating, drinking, working, sexuality, illness, health and drug use. As Simone Bignall, Steve Hemming and Daryle Rigney write, "the affective impact of each encounter, experienced momentarily, is itself dependent upon the momentary social environment in which the encounter takes place: in some contexts, an encounter will be experienced in a way that differs from its impact in another situation."[38]

This caveat, however, also goes the other way. Even though scholars like Jason Read offer strong arguments to show that affects are related to matters of social formation and subjectivity, it seems questionable to speak of these affects as only arising out of abstract processes which somehow exist apart from concrete, material interfaces. After all, even the most abstract desires, fantasies and affects must operate within the confines of bodies, brains, habits, environments and materials. They must be acted out, lived through, and organized in material reality, which means that they also come up against the constraints, contingencies and resistances of that reality. Studying the affective production of subjectivity without analysing the practices through which this subjectivity is *actually lived* runs the risk of universalizing one particular mode of subjectivity, as if there were no room for difference, ambiguity, resistance, and tension in embodied life.[39] If there is one thing affect theorists have shown in three decades of scholarship, it is that such a conclusion overlooks the vicissitudes, contingencies, and forms of agency constituting affective materiality. As Van Tuinen and Meiborg write, "affects cannot be reduced to the different ways in which they are embodied and the intellectual states in which they are interpreted. Rather, they contain a transformative potential."[40] Moreover, centralizing human subjectivity in the study of affect runs the risk of

[36] Bennet, *Vibrant Matter,* 39 – 40.
[37] Ibid.*,* xiii.
[38] Simone Bignall, Steve Hemming, and Daryle Rigney, "Three Ecosophies for the Anthropocene: Environmental Governance, Continental Posthumanism and Indigenous Expressivism," *Deleuze Studies* 10, no. 4 (November 2016): 455–78, https://doi.org/10.3366/dls.2016.0239, 462.
[39] Mark Fisher's concept of 'business ontology,' coined in his influential *Capitalist Realism* (2009), serves as a salient example in this regard. Fisher argues that capitalism has invaded life to such an extent that it has created a new essence for humanity totally attuned to the logic of entrepreneurship, commodification, profit and consumption. Hence, we are witnessing a 'business ontology' across all levels of society. Even though Jason Read's work is more subtle, his thinking also displays universalizing tendencies through quotes like ""it is not just the world, but subjectivity, human existence itself, which is reduced to market value" (The Age of Cynicism, 139).
[40] Van Tuinen and Meiborg, *Deleuze and the Passions,* 10.

overlooking the many realms of affectivity in non-human bodies, which is problematic from the perspective of the eco-ethical materialist paradigm discussed earlier in this article. The task, then, is to bridge the affective gap by investigating concrete, material interfaces *in conjunction with* abstract processes to do justice to these various complexities.

Transversality and Ecosophy

Little work has been done to design a conceptual framework capable of integrating the materiality of affects with various forms of abstraction and the affects arising from them. The task now is to explore what such a framework might look like and what kind of insights come to the fore if it is applied to an analysis of particular interfaces. In this section, I take up the notion of transversality in the works of Félix Guattari and argue that it can provide the conceptual tools to create such an affective framework. I show how Guattari stresses that entities which are generally thought of as occupying different ontological domains continuously overflow and transcend such rigid categorizations through their connections with other entities, creating complex and heterogeneously composed networks which affect and are affected at the intersection of the natural, social, and mental domains. His method of 'transversality' seeks to map these relations and the different levels at which they occur, which provides the ontological backbone for an affective framework which seeks to integrate the two dialects of affect which have been discussed throughout this article.

In *The Three Ecologies* (1989), Guattari develops an interdisciplinary approach to science, philosophy and art he calls 'ecosophy', which maps how various domains of reality interact.[41] As John Tinnell states, "[Guattarian] ecosophy is not the same thing as eco-philosophy: it is not simply the redirection of the philosophical tradition towards ecological concerns. To think ecosophically is to rethink philosophy in our contemporary moment defined by the convergence of nature and culture, ecological crises, globalisation, and the Internet."[42] Guattari's ecosophical framework is composed of three ecological registers: the environmental (the natural and material world) the social (relations between people across all domains of society, such as families, communities, neighbourhoods, schools, work, and care) and the mental (human subjectivity and the possibilities of thought, feeling and action).[43] Guattari's central idea behind expanding the notion of ecology into the social and mental domains is that for him, ecological developments and concerns cannot be separated from social, political and existential issues. Rather, natural processes are continuously affected by a variety of processes and entities within other domains of reality, such as technology, science, media, capital, and labour.[44] In a similar vein, the textures and limits of human subjectivity (what one can feel, think, and do) are not just produced by one's upbringing or the society in which one lives (domains generally associated with abstraction, such as politics and culture), but also by

[41] Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, 17 – 18.
[42] John C. Tinnell, "Transversalising the Ecological Turn: Four Components of Félix Guattari's Ecosophical Perspective," *Deleuze Studies* 6, no. 3 (August 2012): 357–88, https://doi.org/10.3366/dls.2012.0070, 359.
[43] Guattari, *The Three Ecologies,* 17-29.
[44] Ibid., 27.

factors such as one's diet, natural environment, community, sexual orientation, and place of living.[45] As Guattari writes:

> Now more than ever, nature cannot be separated from culture; in order to comprehend the interactions between ecosystems, the mechanosphere and the social and individual Universes of reference, we must learn to think 'transversally'.[46]

Guided by the intuition that these domains of reality cannot be separated, 'thinking transversally' consists of bringing forth how seemingly disparate entities and processes are both empirically different en inextricably connected. As Guattarian scholar Gary Genosko writes, "transversality as a 'bridge' (i.e. across strata in an ontological dimension, or in relation to one or more dimensions) is an idea that occurs several times; the concept retained its break with horizontal and vertical coordinates. (…) Transversality remains a line rather than a point."[47] Here, Genosko emphasizes that transversality is Guattari's way of bringing forth the radical interconnectedness of beings across various ontological dimensions. The mention of a 'line' illustrates how entities continuously cross boundaries in chaotic and unforeseen ways, creating complex networks composed of heterogenous parts which are not fixed or static, but evolving and subject to change.

To illustrate this complex idea, let us take a look at mental health, an issue which occupied Guattari throughout his philosophical career. For Guattari, the textures and limits of subjectivity lived through by a patient in a psychiatric hospital cannot be reduced to that person's illness. Even though this does not make the illness illusory or phantasmatic, it is only one vector of one's subjectivity, usually brought to the fore by a singular relation between expert and patient. In this relation, the expert diagnoses the patient and subscribes treatment based on his interpretation of how to improve the situation. However, Guattari points out that this is not the only relation through which the patient's subjectivity is produced. Living in a psychiatric hospital, the patient is embedded in a diverse and multi-faceted range of relations and affected by entities spanning many ontological registers. To a nurse, he might be a scary and unhinged madman who espouses wild and psychotic fantasies. To a scientist, he might be a fascinating and as-of-yet unknown case of acute schizophrenia. To a fellow patient, he might be a friendly and kind companion who truly understands what life is like in the institution.[48] Moreover, the patient's temper and illness might improve or deteriorate based on the availability and effectiveness of his medication, the food he is served in the hospital, the amount of time he spends walking and exercising, his sleeping schedule, his sensitivity to the hospital's lighting and air quality, and so on. The key idea behind transversality is that *all these entities* interact with each other and are 'channelled' through the patient's subjectivity, whose textures and limits transform as these entities interact and traverse each other in ever-changing ways. Following this idea, the patient's diet does not just affect his stomach, energy levels, and metabolism, but also his social relations, fantasies

[45] Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, 17 – 22.
[46] Ibid., 27.
[47] Gary Genosko, "The Life and Work of Félix Guattari: From Transversality to Ecosophy," essay, in *The Three Ecologies* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 81 – 82.
[48] Paul Elliot, *Guattari Reframed: Interpreting Key Thinkers for the Arts* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 17.

and desires, as well as his mental illness and the subsequent struggles which it brings along. Paul Elliot succinctly captures this point when he writes that "transversality is the degree to which these groups interact, communicate and become open to one another. It is the slipping of the group boundary, the realisation of alterity."[49]

Guattari initially developed the concept of transversality specifically in relation to mental health, but expanded its applicability into the realms of ecology, capital, media, society, and subjectivity. As Delphi Carstens writes, this expanded understanding of transversality entails "an aesthetic perspective open to transports of affect and sudden flashes of insight; one that apprehends reality as a multileveled and polyphonic whole made of interlocking parts. (…) to think transversally (…) means having the courage to map the entangled, unspoken, uncanny and uncomfortable relations that characterize modern machine-mediated consumer society."[50] This statement resonates with Tinnell's insight that "transversality is a radically ecological concept in that it pushes us to constantly (re)articulate things at the relational level of their interactions."[51] Consequently, rearticulating things at the level of their interactions means tracing continuously evolving processes and practices. After all, things are so complex and interrelated that one change in a heterogeneously composed network affects all the other elements swarming within that network.

This is reflected in the strong emphasis on 'process' in Guattari's understanding of transversality. As he states: "while the logic of discursive sets [abstract scientific paradigms] endeavours to completely delimit its objects, the logic of intensities, or eco-logic, is concerned only with the movement and intensity of evolutive processes. Process, which I oppose here to system or structure, strives to capture existence in the very act of its constitution, definition and deterritorialization."[52] Here, Guattari outlines the kernel of the method of transversality. As the quote indicates, he does not want to understand entities and networks solely in terms of the systems or structures in which they are embedded, for this would reduce their unique quality and singular composition to the homogeneity of categories such as 'sick', 'healthy', 'animal', 'human', 'doctor' or 'patient'. Moreover, he argues that thinking in these terms presupposes the existence of abstract and formal structures which stand *apart* from the 'movement and intensity of evolutive processes', functioning as overarching organizing principles. Rather, Guattari conceptualizes reality *itself* as an ever-evolving process, proposing the method of transversality to 'capture existence in the very act of its constitution' by bringing forth how practices, entities, networks and relations which occur in seemingly disparate domains are simultaneously distinct and interconnected.

[49] Elliot, *Guattari Reframed,* 17.
[50] Delphi Carstens, "The Anthropocene Crisis and Higher Education: A Fundamental Shift," *South African Journal of Higher Education* 30, no. 3 (August 2016): 255–73, https://doi.org/10.20853/30-3-650, 259.
[51] Tinnell, "Transversalising the Ecological Turn," 37.
[52] Guattari, *The Three Ecologies,* 29.

Affective Transversality

With the main elements of transversality in place, it is now possible to create a theoretical framework which is capable of thinking affective materiality and abstraction as inextricably connected and continuous. When we relate Guattari's theory to the limitations of the various affective dialects that have been discussed throughout this article, the enriching potential of his framework comes to the fore. Whereas affective materialism runs the risk of overlooking how particular encounters and bodily affects take shape in relation to a variety of abstractions, norms and social relations, the affective production of subjectivity overlooks the complex contingencies, vicissitudes and forms of agency swarming within the material world. Hence, Guattari seems to cover both domains with his transversal thinking-together of material and abstract entities within complex, heterogenous networks.

However, despite its explanatory and critical potential, Guattari's framework also has its problems. As I have stressed, the notion of transversality holds that entities cannot be reduced to specific categories, essences or identities, but must be studied in the heterogenous and dynamic networks that they create alongside other entities. However, if we take this notion literally, it means that *all* relations between *all* entities must be studied at *all* times. After all, every entity in a network also has relations *outside* of that network which impact it in a variety of ways. In the case of the psychiatric hospital, this means that one should not just study how nurses, doctors, and material entities impact a particular patient's subjectivity, but also how *all* these entities are in turn affected by *all* the relations in which they are embedded. But it is clear that a transversal analysis which traces heterogenous relations on this scale of complexity creates a picture of reality so detailed and vast that it would be difficult to extract any meaningful insights from it.

This problem does not degrade the utility of Guattari's framework altogether, but it does show its limits in demarcating the various lines of causation, feedback loops, interactions and encounters that occur in heterogeneously composed networks. As a result of this limitation, Guattari's notion of transversality must be supplemented by an additional methodological tool to demarcate the scope of analysis and the level at which these networks can meaningfully be studied.[53]

In this regard, Oele's understanding of the way in which affectivity arises in relation to a specific material interface can be of value. As she writes: "every interface is not simply an existing place or surface, but a place of ontogenesis: always emerging, creative, porous, and fluid. The benefit of focusing on the concrete interface is that the account of affectivity can be more flexible and faithful to the uniqueness of each concrete form of affectivity and can concretely show *how and where* ontogenesis takes places through affective responses."[54] Integrating this idea with the notion of transversality, the contours of an affective transversal framework start to emerge. Whereas Guattari's theory of transversality allows us to think beyond the dichotomy between materiality and abstraction, Oele's notion of the material interface as the place where affectivity emerges in creative and unique ways allows us to conceptualize the capacity to affect and be

[53] Oele, *E-Co-Affectivity,* 2.
[54] Ibid.

affected as the level at which these relations can meaningfully be studied. Expanding on the ways in which interfaces work, Oele writes: "interfaces separate, mix, and generate two universes as they meet "within." Interfaces provide material conditions that generate certain forms of being; simultaneously, they are never static but prone to change, creativity (…) and engineering."[55] Following the notion of transversality, we can read this notion of universes meeting 'within' interfaces as the coming-together of abstract norms and material entities. This leads to the key methodological tool of an affective transversal framework: the analysis of heterogeneously composed interfaces demarcated by their capacity to affect and be affected. Following Oele's emphasis on the ever-evolving, creative and productive nature of these interfaces, this capacity is in turn understood as the ability of the interface *as a whole* to make new connections with other entities, produce new forms or affections, grow, change, develop, produce, expand, or complexify.

Following the integration of these perspectives, I ask: *what if an affective transversal analysis takes the capacity to affect and be affected as a demarcation to articulate the immanent unfolding of form through an interface?* In asking this question, I inquire into the possibility of an affective transversal analysis to bring into view if, and how, seemingly disparate interfaces display certain paradigmatic behaviours (similarities, patterns, overlappings) on the level of form. This question provides the central line of inquiry for the final sections of this article.

Intensification

Intensification-as-Process

Before moving to a discussion of three different interfaces, it is important to briefly discuss the process with which these interfaces will be connected. For this, I distinguish the 'process of intensification'. This process describes the desire to intensify a certain interface, to push it beyond its immanent limits in order to reach more outcome or productivity.[56] To illustrate how this process materializes, I distinguish three particular interfaces: the pervasive use of synthetic drugs like XTC, cocaine and speed at techno raves and the infamous 'comedown' experienced by frequent ravers (losing the feeling of intense happiness and being

[55] Oele, *E-Co-Affectivity,* 7.

[56] There is a connection to be made between the process of intensification and capitalist organization, which can be said to 'intensify' interfaces in order to extract more profit or surplus-value from them. However, intensification is not *necessarily* tied to capitalist structures, for it can also occur in other socio-economic systems and cultures. Consequently, more theoretical work must be done in order to explore exactly how modern capitalism does or does not follow the process of intensification, but this exceeds the scope of the current article.

'down' after a party)[57], the pervasiveness of burn-outs in modern practices of working,[58] and the (in)fertility of soil as a result of artificial fertilizer in practices of farming.[59]

Following my affective transversal framework, I approach these three examples as heterogenous interfaces demarcated by their capacity to affect and be affected. I choose these particular cases because they all directly illustrate the process of intensification which arises out of a myriad of abstract norms, principles, desires and ideas. In case of the raver, we can think of modern conceptualizations of pleasure and happiness, stylistic hypes and trends, social relations (becoming part of a raving 'scene' in which people frequently attend parties together), advertising and marketing, desire, sexuality, and personal autonomy. For the worker, these are norms on good employment, personal merit and success, the understanding of value through the abstract equivalency of money, competition on the job market, welfare, and livelihood. For the farmer and his soil, these are of conceptualizations of nature as a manipulable entity from which to extract profit and yield, raw materials, access to information and (scientific) knowledge, mastery of technology, and capital.

What makes these interfaces suited for my analysis, is that these various abstractions, norms and ideas emerge and materialize through a wide range of entities which create the conditions for the process of intensification to take place (neurotransmitters, synapses, synthetic drugs, stomachs, fertilizers, pesticides, water, alcohol, coffee, microbes, and soils). Hence, the process of intensification is characterized by the continuous coming-together of entities across a variety of ontological registers, which demands a transversal thinking-together of materiality and abstraction to study their affective composition. With all these elements in place, it is now possible to ask how inquiring into this process across the three interfaces can bring into view a paradigmatic form of behaviour. The notion of the 'paradigmatic form' thereby displays the *specific similarity* in the ways in which material entities and abstractions interact with each other in heterogeneously composed interfaces as a result of intensification.

The Paradigmatic Form of Intensification

The form of intensification that emerges across the interfaces of raving, working and farming is slowly articulated over time. In each case, the abstract norms circulating within the interface affectively infuse the desire to intensify: the raver seeks more intense levels of pleasure, the worker strives to attain higher levels

[57] Scot Thomas, "Molly Side Effects, Long-Terms Risks, & MDMA Comedown: Greenhouse," edited by Amanda Lautieri, Greenhouse Treatment Center, April 24, 2024, https://greenhousetreatment.com/ecstascy/molly

[58] A. Weber & A. Jaekel-Reinhard, "Burnout syndrome: a disease of modern societies?" in Occupational medicine, 2000, 512-513; Byung-Chul Han, *The Burnout Society*, trans. Erik Butler (Stanford, CA: Stanford Briefs, an imprint of Stanford University Press, 2015).

[59] Nikita Bisht and Puneet Singh Chauhan, "Excessive and Disproportionate use of Chemicals Cause Soil Contamination and Nutritional Stress," essay, in *Soil Contamination – Threats and Sustainable Solutions,"* find good page number.

of productivity, and the farmer demands more crops from his soil. Hence, the process of intensification is set in motion by an *imperative of increased output.*

Initially, this process runs up against an immanent limit: the raver, the worker and the soil can only produce a limited amount of output within the constraints of their interface. After all, there is only a certain amount of hormones and neurotransmitters (serotonin, dopamine, norepinephrine), money and time a raver has in order to attain the affective experience of pleasure, a certain amount of energy, time and attention a worker has to produce profits, and a certain amount of vitamins, minerals, water and micro-organisms a piece of soil has to yield crops. Crucially, this also means that there is a limited amount of output which can be generated by the interface in a way which allows it to maintain its health through autopoiesis, self-repair, and generativity. Phrasing this in terms of my affective transversal framework, *there is an immanent limit to the interface's capacity to affect and be affected.* This point is succinctly articulated by new materialist scholar Rosi Braidotti, who writes:

> Affectivity in fact is what activates an embodied subject, empowering him or her to interact with others. This acceleration of one's existential speed, or increase of one's affective temperature, is the dynamic process of becoming. It follows that a subject can think/understand/do/become no more than what he or she can take or sustain within his or her embodied, spatiotemporal coordinates. *This deeply positive understanding of the human subject posits built-in, bioorganic limitations* (emphasis added).[60]

Reflecting the desire to increase productivity and outcome, the process of intensification cannot respect these limitations, but rather continuously seeks to displace them. Across all three interfaces, this is accomplished by *adding artificial supplements* to the interface to surpass its immanent limit. For the raver, this means taking synthetic 'uppers' like cocaine, XTC and speed which provide more energy and can enforce the desire for intense pleasure and enjoyment, becoming more thoroughly embedded in the raving 'scene', strictly following stylistic norms, relocating more time and money to attend raves, and so on. For the worker, these are things like coffee, constantly increasing working hours, lack of sleep, perpetual training, and continuous availability and flexibility. For the farmer, this means using artificial fertilizer and pesticides, narrowly integrating tools and technology with the soil, and the relocation of money, time and energy towards the optimization of the interface. These artificial supplements facilitate the process of intensification by displacing the immanent limits of the interface, changing its affective composition to enforce a desired increase of output. The results of this are evident: the raver can dance until dawn in a state of ecstasy, the worker can keep going for hours on end at every day of the week, and the soil generates massive amounts of crops. *Hence, the process of intensification leads to an increase in the capacity of the interface to affect and be affected through artificial supplements, which constitutes the movement of 'rising' as the first stage of its paradigmatic form.*

This movement of rising, however, can only exist for a relatively short amount of time. After a certain period of increasing affectivity, the process of intensification reaches a second, fleeting stage: the

[60] Rosi Braidotti, "The Politics of 'life itself' and New Ways of Dying," essay, in *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency and Politics,* ed. Samantha Frost and Diane Coole (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010): 210.

peak. This is the brief moment of maximum productivity, where artificial supplements have re-arranged the interface to generate a spectacular amount of output in a hyper-concentrated block of time. Phrased in terms of my affective framework, this stage constitutes the capacity to affect and be affected to the highest degree, the absolute limit, the maximum level of intensity.

However, due to the artificial nature through which this stage of intensification is reached, it cannot last for long. Regulatory processes of the interface like autopoiesis and self-repair – which ensure its health and allow it to maintain a certain level of affectivity – are slowly worn down to the eventual point of breaking. Hence, the process of intensification inevitably changes from an *increase* in the capacity of the interface to affect and be affected to a *decrease* of that capacity. On the level of form, this constitutes the third stage of rapid *falling*: the raver starts to lose his high, the worker experiences growing levels of fatigue, and the soil starts to show decreasing levels of fertility. The stage of falling is quickly followed by a fourth and final stage which completes the paradigmatic form: *exhaustion.* In case of the raver, this is feeling 'down' (severe emptiness, inertia or depression), in case of the worker, this is the burn-out; in case of farming, this is dead (infertile) soil. *It is the moment of intensity = 0, where the process of intensification has lead to a depleted and inert interface which can no longer affect, but only be affected.*

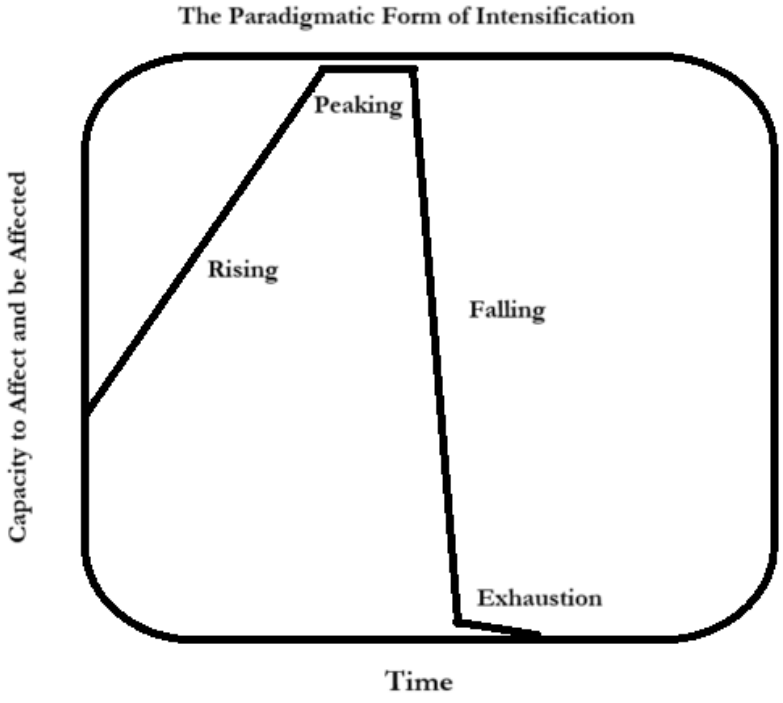

Figure 1: Visual Representation of the Paradigmatic Form of Intensification

As my transversal analysis across these three interfaces shows, a paradigmatic form composed of four stages (rising, peaking, falling, exhaustion) emerges in relation to the process of intensification. However, this does

not mean that intensification always takes the same amount of time or occurs in the exact same way. The notion of 'time' in the figure above indicates the chronological order of the various stages, but its measurement is relative rather than absolute. This means that the form of intensification allows for quite some temporal scaling in accordance with the interface under consideration. For example, when the raver's interface reaches the stage of 'exhaustion' (being 'down' after the rave), this is likely to last somewhere between a day and a week. However, when the worker reaches this stage (burn-out), it can take months or even years for her to regain the capacity to affect and be affected. In the case of soil, this process could even span multiple years to decades. As such, my analysis does not show that these interfaces are *empirically* identical as a result of intensification, but rather that they are *formally* identical, which underpins the idea that they are 'paradigmatic behaviours'. Consequently, it illustrates how similarities and overlappings can be discerned across seemingly disparate domains of reality as a result of an affective transversal framework which thinks material and abstract affects as interrelated and continuous. Moreover, the paradigmatic form of intensification shows how a process which is generally associated with classically 'human' realms such as raving, working and farming emerges in relation to entities that reach far beyond these domains, such as the inner workings of brains, bodies, and soils.

Conclusions & Implications for Further Research

In this article, I have centralized the relationship between abstraction and materiality in the study of affect to show that novel insights can be found by 'bridging the affective gap.' With this phrase, I allude to the central thesis I have defended throughout this article, which holds that affect scholars working within the dialects of affective materialism and the affective production of subjectivity stand to benefit from broadening their scope of analysis. Guided by the intuition that affect is an ambiguous, fleeting and transitory object of study circulating within a heterogeneously composed world, I have explored a possible way in which affect study can stay with the tension between abstraction and materiality – rather than attempt to resolve it – to produce new insights. Drawing together concepts from a variety of sources within affect theory and transversal ecosophy, I have traced the contours of an affective transversal framework which integrates an analysis of the immanent workings of concrete, material interfaces with the abstract processes, structures and affects with which material entities continuously interact. This framework is underpinned by the idea that if we ask how an account of affectivity can articulate the immanent unfolding of form through matter, we must also ask how and why a *particular* form of behaviour appears in a *particular* time and place. I have illustrated this point through my analysis of intensification, which brings forth how this process creates a paradigmatic form of behaviour at the level of affect consisting of four stages – rising, peaking, falling, exhaustion.

The first key takeaway from this analysis is that approaching reality through an affective transversal framework can bring forth certain patterns and formal similarities which would otherwise remain hidden from view. After all, the paradigmatic form of intensification could not come into view if we would approach

raving, working and farming in strictly material *or* abstract terms, or see them as taking place in essentially different contexts. This would overlook how they take shape in relation to a variety of abstract norms and ideas circulating within society, as well as the contingencies and vicissitudes of materiality through which they are actualized.

Moreover, approaching affectivity on the level of the paradigmatic form shows that there is a *finite amount of ways in which heterogenous interfaces composed of material entities and abstractions behave*. In other words, entities from a wide range of ontological registers might collide, traverse, interact and impact each other in many different ways, but there are certain regularities, patterns and overlappings that occur in specific situations or contexts, such as the rising, peaking, and falling levels of affectivity followed by exhaustion in the process of intensification. This stands in contrast to the tendency in affect scholarship to cherish and celebrate the multiplicity, diversity, and abundance of affects, forces and entities without looking for the ways in which *divergent* entities can display *similar* behaviours. As I have shown through my analysis, the explanatory power of affective inquiry can be enhanced through a new methodological tool which highlights paradigmatic forms of behaviour between seemingly unrelated interfaces.

Related to this is the notion that an affective transversal analysis not only creates a more exhaustive understanding of interfaces and paradigmatic forms of behaviour as they emerge through affective processes, but also allows for more critical and evaluative potential within affect scholarship. In times of unprecedented ecological suffering, exploitation and intensification, affect scholars need frameworks which allow them to go beyond the mere *description* of affects towards their critical *evaluation* in order to bring forth how certain paradigmatic forms of behaviour arise in relation to violent, dangerous and unsustainable processes propelled by abstract norms and ideas. For example, describing a phenomenon like burn-out through the immanent unfolding of form in four stages does not tell a complete enough story about *how a society creates the desire in a person to live a life that takes this particular form*. How do desires, affects and ideas create an infrastructure which makes a person willingly work herself into a state of complete inertia? What role do material factors like nourishment, 80-hour work weeks and coffee play in facilitating the process of intensification, and how might we think differently about them? How does the same affective infrastructure which fosters the pervasiveness of burn-outs in modern practices of labour support a culture of fashionable intoxication, where synthetic drugs are willingly taken in order to transcend the immanent limits of an interface as feeble as our own brain? What role do our conceptions of pleasure, enjoyment, and happiness play in maintaining and facilitating these practices? And how does this relate to the production and consumption of food, such as extracting fruits and vegetables from fragile soils through the massive use artificial fertilizers and pesticides?

Through my analysis, I have shown that these are the kinds of critical, evaluative questions which can emerge if we approach affect in a transversal way. Aside from this, my affective framework also offers theoretical tools which allow for further inquiry into a whole range of processes across many different interfaces and registers. Centralizing the process of intensification across the interfaces of raving, working

and farming is only one *possible* way in which an affective transversal analysis can be done, but there are many more possibilities for further thought. Bridging the affective gap in a different way, we might for example ask: what would a transversal analysis of 'erosion' look like across phenomena such as rocks, marriage, and mental health? Could we see a paradigmatic form of behaviour arise across these interfaces and, if so, how and why would it be different from the form of intensification? This is but a single example of the kind of question that can be taken up by further research at the intersection of transversal thought, affect theory and metaphysics to both accurately *describe* and critically *evaluate* the complex affective dynamisms shaping the textures of the modern world. As I hope to have shown through my analysis, this kind of thinking could create conceptual space in order to evaluate and re-imagine our practices of living, working, thinking, and feeling.

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PhD Proposal - Affective Transversality in the Anthropocene

Summary of the project

Many humanities scholars emphasize that a better understanding of *affects* is required to adequately grasp and evaluate the complexities of the Anthropocene. In his famous definition of the term, Baruch Spinoza states that "by affect I understand the affections of the body by which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections."[61] Despite the growing body of research across the humanities which draws on this understanding of affect, there is little debate – let alone consensus – on what would constitute a proper *methodology* to (a) study affect and (b) integrate different analytical approaches to affect. Instead, contemporary affect scholarship is composed of a variety of 'dialects' in which scholars go their own way, leading to tensions and contradictions between various accounts. In response to this, the project aims to develop a common methodological framework for affect studies. Such a framework can serve as a tool to determine which accounts of affect are theoretically sound, and it can provide a theoretical basis for the combination of various analytical perspectives on affect. The project's hypothesis is that such a framework can be developed by starting with the concept of 'transversality'. Originally proposed by scholars like Félix Guattari, transversal analysis highlights the interconnectedness and heterogeneity of entities, whereas the notion of 'affect' demarcates the chosen objects of inquiry and the level at which they can meaningfully be studied through their capacity to affect and be affected. Taken together, these terms form the basic conceptual architecture for the intended framework.

Description of the proposed research

Status Quaestionis – Affect in the Anthropocene

Scholars across the humanities and social sciences agree almost unanimously that the Anthropocene blurs boundaries between human and non-human entities that have been upheld in Western intellectual history for centuries. As Laurel Peacock writes: "In the Anthropocene an awareness of the effects of human history on natural history (and vice versa) has made it difficult to continue to distinguish human actor from passive environment."[62] One reason for this is that natural processes thrown off balance by destructive human endeavours have started to threaten life across the planet, forcing human and non-human entities to actively engage with – and strategically respond to – their changing environments.[63]

In philosophy, this has lead scholars to argue that the ecological crisis can – and should – no longer be studied as a strictly natural or geological phenomenon. As Timothy Morton writes, "ecology isn't just

[61] Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. W. H. White (London: Wordsworth Editions, 2001), III, Def. 3.
[62] Laurel Peacock, "SAD in the Anthropocene: Brenda Hillman's Ecopoetics of Affect," *Environmental Humanities* 1, no. 1 (May 2012): 85–102, https://doi.org/10.1215/22011919-3609985, 86.
[63] Timothy Morton, *The Ecological Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (Chicago , Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 2017); Marjolein Oele, *E-Co-Affectivity,* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2020).

about global warming, recycling, and solar power – and also not just to do with everyday relationships between humans and nonhumans. It has to do with, love, loss, despair, and compassion. It has to do with depression and psychosis. (…) it has to do with delight, beauty, ugliness, disgust, irony and pain."[64] As Morton argues, human and nonhuman life is so strongly affected by environmental change and destruction that we can no longer separate ecology from issues such as emotion, embodiment and mental health.

One concept which is often used to inquire into precisely this dimension of life in the age of the Anthropocene is 'affect'. In his famous definition of the term, Baruch Spinoza states that "By affect I understand affections of the body by which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections."[65] Scholars deem this concept particularly useful because it allows them to centralize the ways in which human and nonhuman bodies are intimately immersed in their natural and material environments. It thereby helps to highlight the ways in which changes in the natural world as a result of climate change impact the many facets of embodied life, via for example emotion, trauma, health, and illness. As Kyle Bladow and Jennifer Ladino write, "affect theory disrupts both discrete notions of embodied selfhood and static notions of environment, encouraging us to trace the trajectories of transcorporeal encounters that are intricate and dynamic."[66] This intuition underpins a variety of affect-theoretical approaches to the Anthropocene under labels such as affective ecocriticism[67], eco-affectivity[68], Morton's aforementioned 'dark ecology' and the study of 'earth emotions'[69] in relation to climate change.[70]

However, affect studies is not without its problems. In fact, despite being a flourishing field in the humanities for almost three decades now, affect studies suffers from a marked inability to (a) define its own central concept and (b) operate within a common methodological framework that would merit its status as a specific *kind* of theoretical inquiry. Since the start of the 'affective turn' in the humanities, social sciences and cognitive sciences in the 1990s, many definitions of affect have been coined in the blossoming field of affect studies, and not all of them are commensurable. Some of them are even outright contradictory As cultural theorist Lawrence Grossberg writes:

> People rarely raise, in critical and contested ways, the question of *what they mean by 'affect',* leaving one to confront a field without a reason or, at least, without a concept. (…) Not only is there no shared definition – after all, many fields operate with such disagreements over the nature of their object – but this chaotic disagreement is distributed on rather distinct levels of investigation and

[64] Morton, *The Ecological Thought,* 2.
[65] Spinoza, *Ethics*, III, Def. 3.
[66] Kyle Bladow and Jennifer Ladino, "Toward an Affective Ecocriticism: Placing Feeling in the Anthropocene," introduction, in *Affective Ecocriticism: Emotion, Embodiment, Environment* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2018), 8.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Oele, *E-Co-Affectivity*, 1-15.
[69] Glenn Albrecht, *Earth Emotions: New Words for a New World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019).
[70] Ann E. Kaplan, "Is Climate-Related Pre-Traumatic Stress Syndrome a Real Condition?," *American Imago* 77, no. 1 (May 2020): 81–104, https://doi.org/10.1353/aim.2020.0004.

> reality: from an ontology of capacities, to the materiality of corporeal sensations and impacts, to autonomic and non-conscious behaviours, to embodied phenomenological experience and to subjective states of being.[71]

In other words, many scholars use the term affect to describe certain relations between human and non-human bodies and their environments, but do so without providing a clear idea of the level at which these relations should be studied, how they should be conceptualized, and what the implications of thinking in affective terms really are. One consequence of this conceptual vagueness is the emergence of a wide variety of 'dialects' in contemporary affect scholarship which use very different analytical registers and objects of study. Scholars working at the intersection of affect theory and materialism such as Jane Bennett and Marjolein Oele argue that affects are strictly material in nature, and use these insights to analyse how climate change upsets and disrupts human and non-human bodies.[72] Other scholars stress the relation between affects and abstract processes by studying how specific desires and fears are connected to specific kinds of society, for example capitalist society and the entrepreneurial desire to 'make it'.[73] The differences between even just these two dialects in the field of affect theory already highlight a major philosophical question: is affect fundamentally *material* or *abstract*?

Moreover, Grossberg argues that affect theorists also rarely ask on what conceptual and methodological grounds their divergent analyses of affects would be *commensurable* with each other (or not), despite the field's frequent celebration of its diversified and interdisciplinary approach.[74] As he writes: "all too often, particular discussions of affect 'work' precisely because they [act as if] there were some guaranteed correspondence or even equivalence between them, without ever having to specify the articulations and determinations that connect them."[75] This point is echoed by affect scholar Donovan Schaefer, who writes that "affect theory is at a stage where it will benefit from a survey of its concepts and a clearer delineation of its analytical tool kit."[76] As these insights show, the contemporary field of affect theory and the investigation of affect in the Anthropocene are in need of more theoretical work on both the basic conceptual as well as the methodological foundations of affect.

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[71] Lawrence Grossberg and Bryan G. Behrenshausen, "Cultural Studies and Deleuze-Guattari, Part 2: From Affect to Conjunctures," *Cultural Studies* 30, no. 6 (May 2016): 1001–28, https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2016.1173476, 1005.

[72] Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter,* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Marjolein Oele, *E-Co-Affectivity,* (New York: New York University Press, 2022).

[73] Donna Haraway, "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin," *Environmental Humanities* 6, no. 1 (May 1, 2015): 159–65, https://doi.org/10.1215/22011919-3615934; Isabelle Stengers, "Accepting the Reality of Gaia: A Fundamental Shift," essay, in *The Anthropocene and the Global Environmental Crisis: Rethinking Modernity in a New Epoch*, ed. Clive Hamilton, Christophe Bonneuil, and François Gemenne (London: Routledge, 2015), 134–44; Jason Read, "The Affective Economy," essay, in *Deleuze and the Passions,* ed. Sjoerd van Tuinen and Ceceil Meiborg (Brooklyn, NY: Punctum Books, 2016), 111.

[74] Gregory J. Seigworth and Carolyn Pedwell, "Introduction: A Shimmer of Inventories," introduction, in *The Affect Theory Reader 2: Worldings, Tensions, Futures* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2023), 1 – 50.

[75] Grossberg and Behrenshausen, "Cultural Studies and Deleuze-Guattari," 1005.

[76] Donovan Schaefer, *The Evolution of Affect Theory: The Humanities, the Sciences, and the Study of Power* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), 6.

Aims/research questions

The project has two interrelated aims. The first is to create an overarching framework within affect scholarship which is capable of distinguishing meaningful and sensible theories and definitions of affect from incoherent ones to delineate its analytical toolkit. It does so by thinking through the foundations of affect, which brings forth that affect can, for example, not simultaneously be a power, an emotion, and a pre-personal intensity corresponding to the passage from one state of the body to another.[77] The second aim is for this framework to show how meaningful but divergent accounts of affect can be connected to each other to expand the amount of concepts and theoretical registers at the disposal of affect scholars. As such, the project's second aim is to bridge the gap between various 'dialects' within affect theory which – as of yet – do not actively engage with each other's theories and viewpoints. These two aims converge in the project's central research question:

How can the theoretical landscape of affect theory be enriched by concepts which are capable of (1) providing sharp and well-defined notions of affect, and (2) connecting divergent but commensurable accounts of affect with each other to expand the explanatory power of affective inquiry?

The point of departure for this project is the concept of 'transversality'. Originating in the field of mathematics to describe how two objects or lines intersect, the notion of transversality was reworked by the French philosopher, psychotherapist and political activist Félix Guattari (1930 – 1992) to become a way of mapping the many different relations in which human and non-human entities are embedded.[78] Guattari developed the idea of transversality because he was dissatisfied with the tendency of modern philosophy and science to put entities into rigid conceptual categories, emphasizing that these entities constantly overflow neat categorization and classification (social, human, animal, sick, healthy, normal, insane, vegetable, abstract, material) because they continuously interact with and shape each other in chaotic and unforeseen ways.[79]

The reason why transversality serves as the point of departure for the project is that it highlights how (human and nonhuman) bodies are affected by a wide range of entities across various realms of reality. As such, integrating transversality into affective inquiries can create conceptual space to connect various dialects in affect theory to each other which would otherwise remain at odds, such the aforementioned theories about materiality and abstraction. This is needed, because if certain affect theorists "equate affect

[77] These three (incommensurable) understandings of affect feature in Lone Bertelsen and Andrew Murphie's text "An Ethics of Everyday Infinities and Powers – Félix Guattari on Affect and the Refrain" in *The Affect Theory Reader* (2010).
[78] Félix Guattari, *Psychoanalysis and Transversality: Texts and Interviews 1955-1971*, ed. Gilles Deleuze, trans. Ames Hodges (Pasadena: Semiotext(e), 2015), 80.
[79] Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2000), 28.

with materiality"[80] whereas others argue that "affect must be a way of grasping the abstractions that determine individual and collective life,"[81] it seems as if these thinkers are not using the same definition of the term. However, as Grossberg points out, it is important for affective inquiries to include material (embodied) as well as abstract (contextual, processual, systemic) factors. As he writes, "one cannot take any singular affective statement, event, strategy of formation as given in its own singularity or specificity, by itself as it were, outside of the multiplicities and scales of their contexts. In this way only can we begin to think about the balance between the old and the new insofar as it relates both to affective power and to larger concerns of conjunctural power."[82] The research hypothesizes that transversality can provide the necessary tools to connect such 'singular affective statements or events' (read as the *material* dimension of affect) with 'the multiplicities and scales of their contexts' (read as its *abstract* dimension).

This hypothesis require further elaboration and explanation. First, it must be shown why the notion of transversality can be of value in response to the fundamental theoretical problem(s) within affect theory outlined above. Then, it must be shown why this conceptual connection can be a valuable addition to scholarly work on affect and the Anthropocene. Finally, it is necessary to trace the preliminary contours of the affective transversal method which the research seeks to fully develop and articulate the overall scientific and social relevance of this project.

Affective Transversality

As is mentioned above, the central conceptual problem to which the method of affective transversality responds, is to distinguish between coherent and incoherent accounts of affect and to bridge the gap between various 'dialects' of affect theory which focus on certain entities, registers or object over others in the study of affect(s) and the Anthropocene. Crucially, this does not mean that affective transversality seeks to merely *expand* the notion of affect to include both material entities and abstract processes. Even though this would enrich the explanatory scope of affective inquiry by increasing the amount of registers in which affects circulate, it would still depart from the underlying assumption that certain affects *are* material, whereas others *are* abstract. As Guattari repeatedly stresses, transversality seeks to map how *every element of a specific network is connected, impacted and shaped by every other element within that network*.[83]

It is crucial to emphasize that the proposed research does not boil down to simply 'applying' a set of ready-made Guattarian ideas to the field of affect studies, for Guattari's theoretical development of the

[80] Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, xiii
[81] Jason Read, "The Affective Economy: Producing and Consuming Affects in Deleuze and Guattari," essay, in *The Production of Subjectivity: Marx and Philosophy* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2023), 169.
[82] Grossberg and Behrenshausen, "Cultural Studies and Deleuze-Guattari," 1005.
[83] Guattari uses various terms to describe 'networks' as the interlocking of various entities into a (loosely) organized whole. Most notably, his work with Gilles Deleuze propose the concepts of 'machine' and 'assemblage' to describe such entities. However, these complex concepts require more explanation and elaboration. As such, it suffices here to simply refer to such entities as networks.

concept of transversality is not without its problems. These problems arise from the fact that as a method which aims to trace the manifold complexities of a relationally constructed and dynamic world, it is unclear when to stop tracing entities and how to make any meaningful claims about them. In other words, if *every* element of a transversal analysis must be studied in terms of *all* the relations it has with *all* its surrounding entities, the scope and scale of inquiry will simply become too vast. Hence, it is important to find a way of doing a transversal analysis capable of crossing conceptual boundaries and mapping relations between entities without making the relevant object(s) of study so complex that they cannot be accurately described.

This research therefore *also* operates on the hypothesis that the concept of 'affect' itself can aid in the methodological aspirations of the method of transversality. Given the significant influence of Guattari's work in the humanities (most notably, his joint collaborations with Gilles Deleuze), transversality has become such a common term that it is often used interchangeably with concepts such as 'interdisciplinarity' and 'pluralism'. Contrary to these understandings of the concept, this research aims to distinguish transversality by further developing its intended use as a *method* for doing research. This means that it does not just map relations between entities *ad infinitum,* for this would create a picture of reality as detailed as it is incomprehensible. *Rather, the method of affective transversality tries to provide detailed maps of how entities compose complex networks which are characterized by their capacity to affect and be affected.* In other words, affective transversality aims to study the radical interconnectedness of entities in the age of the Anthropocene, but frames these connections in terms of the capacity to affect and by affected. This capacity is in turn understood as the ability of the network to make new connections with other entities, produce new forms or affections, grow, change, develop, produce, expand, or complexify. As such, it tries to bring into view how material elements stand in direct relation to abstract structures, processes and desires in ways which can either work to their detriment (a decrease in the capacity to affect or be affected) or their flourishing (an increase in the capacity to affect and be affected). Crucially, this also allows the method of affective transversality to be applied to the heterogenous networks impacted by the ecological crisis, in which natural, cultural, social, human, nonhuman, material, abstract entities collide in ways that are (often) destructive, unsustainable, or violent.

Scholarly Relevance of the Project

The project seeks to make a contribution to three (interrelated) areas of research: affect theory, affective inquiries into the Anthropocene, and transversal thought. As alluded to throughout this proposal, affect theory and affective inquiries into the Anthropocene lack an overarching framework capable of bringing together various affective registers and objects of study. Affective transversality attempts to provide such a framework by rejecting the notion that affects circulate between distinct entities or registers, instead focussing on the ways in which these entities constantly transcend and overflow conceptual boundaries within heterogenous networks. Moreover, in doing so the project also highlights a problem in transversal thought related to increasing complexity and scale; it is simply impossible to map *all* the relations of *all*

entities at *all* times. The concept of 'affect' hereby serves as a form of demarcation to allow specific networks to be studied in terms of their capacity to affect and be affected. An affective transversal framework thereby creates conceptual space for humanities scholars to point out exactly how increases or decreases at the level of affect have come become about, why they are (un)problematic, and offer new ways in which to think about – and possibly intervene in – these affective processes.

Societal Relevance of the Project

By engaging directly with the many (detrimental) effects that a changing environment has on human and non-human entities and the networks they compose, this project is thoroughly embedded in one of the most pressing and urgent crises of contemporary society. As such, it seeks to bring to the fore new insights on the ways in which the ongoing disasters of climate change impacts contemporary reality. The project thereby contributes to ongoing initiatives across various scientific and societal domains to accurately understand the contemporary ecological crisis in order to pave the way for more durable and sustainable practices of thinking, feeling and acting.

Key Words

Affect, transversality, materiality, abstraction, Guattari

Timetable

Period	*Research*	*Output*
September '25 – July '26	Schematize various foundational accounts of affect which offer definitions of the term. This will be done by close-reading Baruch Spinoza's *Ethics,* as well as Brian Massumi's *Parables for the Virtual* (2002) and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980). Trace connections between these foundational texts and contemporary affect scholarship to show the impact and lasting influence of certain definitions of affect in modern debates,	Write a state of the art paper (in a similar format to the one written in the Research Master) on the *foundations* of affect. Draft the first chapter of the PhD thesis based on this literature review. Start publication process of 'Bridging the Affective Gap' (publishable article submitted for completion of Research Master in philosophy)

	as well as their main theoretical divergences. Read the state of the art in the field of affective inquiries into the Anthropocene. This will be done through Timothy Morton's works *The Ecological Thought* (201) and *Dark Ecology* (2016), Glenn Albrecht's *Earth Emotions* (2019), and Marjolein Oele's *E-Co-Affectivity* (2022).	
September '26 – July '27	Map the ways in which Guattari's understanding of transversality developed throughout his philosophical career and distil a central definition of the concept from this reading. This will be done by close-reading his works *Psychoanalysis and Transversality* (1972), *The Three Ecologies* (1989) and *Chaosmosis* (1992) Connect these readings to the chapter drafted in year 1 to trace the contours of an affective transversal framework. Research semester abroad, preferably to visit Guattarian scholar Gary Genosko at the 'Ontario Tech' Institute for Social Science and Humanities in Canada and work with him on Guattari's theory of transversality in relation to ecosophy.	Write a chronological overview of the ways in which Guattarian transversality developed, how the concept is applied in contemporary debates, and extract a general definition or framework from these readings. Finish the first chapter of the PhD thesis. Draft the second chapter of the PhD thesis based on the aforementioned literature review on transversality. Start drafting the third chapter of the PhD thesis. Draft a second publishable article on the chronology of transversal thought, preferably to be published in the peer-reviewed journal *Deleuze and Guattari Studies*.
September '27 – July '28	Further develop the framework of affective transversality and bring this into connection with the various strengths	Finish the second chapter of the PhD thesis.

	and weaknesses of the literature on 'affectivity in the Anthropocene'.	Finish the third chapter of the PhD thesis. Draft a publishable article on 'affective transversality in the Anthropocene'. Draft the final chapter of the PhD thesis, the introduction and the conclusion. Teach a research seminar on affect and the Anthropocene together with prof. dr. Marjolein Oele (Radboud University).
September '28 – July '29	Finish the framework of affective transversality through a discussion with the three areas of research to which it is most closely related: the foundations of affect, the development of transversality in Guattari's thought, and affectivity in the Anthropocene.	Finish the final chapter, the introduction and the conclusion of the PhD thesis. Teach a research seminar or course on affective transversality.

Summary for non-specialists

Since the 1990s, the humanities, social sciences and cognitive sciences have been subject to an 'affective turn,' a research paradigm in which scholars investigate how affects exert their influence on human and non-human reality beyond the realms of language, culture and discourse. In his famous definition of the term, Baruch Spinoza states that "by affect I understand the affections of the body by which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections."[84] In short, this definition tries to capture how bodies are constantly in motion, impacting and colliding with each other and enhancing their respective powers of acting as a result of these interactions.

Despite the growing body of research across the humanities which draws on this embodied and relational understanding of affect to inquire into the complexities of contemporary reality, there is no consensus on what a proper methodology to study or map affects would be. Whereas certain scholars argue that affects are strictly *material* in nature and should accordingly be studied on the level of the (nonhuman) body (growth, trauma, health, sickness), other scholars argue that affects arise out of *abstract processes* within society (joy, cynicism, pleasure, disgust, envy, etc), such as capitalism and politics. Even though these various dialects use the same term, their objects of study, theoretical reference points and methods diverge so strongly that it seems as if they are talking about different concepts.

In response to such tensions, this project seeks to develop the method of 'affective transversality', a new theoretical tools to distinguish, qualify and unite various accounts of affect. The notion of transversality originates in the works of the French philosopher Félix Guattari and highlights how entities and affects are interconnected, dynamic and continuous, which creates conceptual space to bridge accounts in affect theory which construe of such entities and affects as fundamentally *discontinuous* (that is, fundamentally 'different'). The notion of affect complements this idea of transversality by demarcating the chosen objects of inquiry and the level at which they can meaningfully be studied through their capacity to affect and be affected.

Taken together, these terms form the conceptual architecture for a new method of affective inquiry which aims to describe how all kinds of different entities compose heterogenous networks which can be affected to their detriment (a decrease in their capacity to affect and be affected) or their flourishing (an increase of that capacity). Consequently, this can allow affect scholars to both accurately *describe* the various affective forces shaping a complex network and critically *evaluate* how these networks are impacted to their detriment or flourishing in times of unprecedented ecological change.

[84] Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. W. H. White (London: Wordsworth Editions, 2001), III, Def. 3.

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Curriculum Vitae

A) Education

02.2022 – Present	*Radboud University Nijmegen* Research Master in Metaphysics and Philosophical Anthropology Thesis Title: "Bridging the Affective Gap: An Affective Transversal Analysis of the Paradigmatic Form of Intensification."
01.2021 – 12.2023	*Tilburg University* Master in Philosophy of Humanity and Culture (graduated *cum laude*) Thesis Title: "The Dawn of a New Day: A Psychoanalytic Reading of Capitalist Realism" (9).
09.2016 – 06.2019	*Utrecht University* Bachelor in Media and Cultural Studies Thesis Title: "Theodor Adorno en Friedrich Nietzsche: Een Vergelijkende Analyse van Twee Tegendraadse Cultuurcritici" (8). Relevant extracurricular courses: Humanities Honours Program, 2017 – 2019.

B) Work Experience

04.2023 – 07.2023	*Teaching Assistant, Radboud University, Philosophy of Management Sciences* First year's bachelor course on ethics, political philosophy and philosophy of science.

09.2019 – 12.2023 *Tutor at Lyceo*

Teacher of small-scale exam seminars at Dutch secondary schools.

Helping disadvantaged schoolchildren in secondary education with skills and planning (Lyceo Opstap).

C) Internships

01.2019 – 06.2019 *Project Assistant, voordekunst*

Helping artists in various disciplines successfully realize their crowdfunding campaigns through a trajectory of personal coaching.

Giving workshops to aspiring creatives.

D) Extracurricular Activities

- Participation in '**Summer School for Subjectivity and Philosophy of Mind**,' organized by the Centre for Subjectivity Research at Copenhagen University (August 2023).
- Active member of **Filosofisch Café** responsible for organizing monthly events where philosophy is made accessible to a wide audience (2022 - 2023).
- Editor-in-chief of **Splijtstof**, the official student journal at the faculty of Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies at Radboud University (2022 2023).
- Editor-in-chief of **BLIK**, the official student journal at the faculty of media and cultural studies at Utrecht University (2018-2019).
- Moderator at the **Splijtstof Symposium** on 'Bodies and Embodiment' (September 2023).
- Co-founder of ' **Thought Magicians'**, an open-access digital platform for the publication of non-academic philosophy (2023 – present).

E) Publications and Talks

- Talk at the Graduate Conference '**Moving Humanities'** on September 3, 2022, titled "The Old, the New, and the Possible: A Critical Reading of the Metaphysical Structure Underlying Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory."
- Publication of "**The Metaphysics of Techno**" in Splijtstof 51 no. 2 (March '23).
- Publication of "**The Fragility of the Surface Reinterpreting Paul Cézanne's Artistic Expression Through the Concept of the Porous Body**" in Splijtstof, 51 no. 3 (July '23).
- Publication of "**Status Quaestionis – Aoife McInerney**" in Splijtstof, 51 no. 3 (July '23).
- Opening Talk at the Splijtstof Symposium on '**Bodies and Embodiment'** on September 27, 2023.