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The ‘politics of affect’: the phrase is somewhat redundant. Affect, as it is conceived in this book, is not a discipline of study of which the politics of affect would be a subdiscipline. It is a dimension of life – including of writing, including of reading – which directly carries a political valence.

The interviews that follow do not purport to present a comprehensive treatment of the field of affect. Neither do they present an introductory encapsulation – although it is hoped that the dialogic format renders the ins and out of affect more immediately accessible than the academic format. They are an invitation to voyage. Their aim is to map a passage for thinking through the intensities of feeling that fill life, and form it, across its ups and downs. Thinking *through* affect is not just reflecting on it. It is thought taking the plunge, consenting to ride the waves of affect on a crest of words, drenched to the conceptual bone in the fineness of its spray. Affect is only understood as enacted. This book hopes to

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enact affect conceptually for the reader through its stream of words.

The account developed here makes no claim to objectivity or general applicability. What would an objective or general approach bring to the singular qualities of life that compose its affective dimension? Stilling. Dullening. Dead disciplinary reckoning. The aim is not to convince with claims of validity, but rather to convey something of the vivacity of the topic: to invite and to incite the reader towards thought experiences pitching off-chart from the pages of the book, on a course of their own beyond its ken. To ‘think through’ affect is to continue its life-filling, life-forming journey. A concept, Gilles Deleuze once said, is lived or it is nothing.

The angle of approach pursued here can be described as that of process philosophy in its widest sense. What the thinkers to whose work the discussions regularly return – Henri Bergson, William James, Alfred North Whitehead, Gilbert Simondon, Félix Guattari, Gilles Deleuze – have in common is construing the task of philosophy as understanding the world as an ongoing process in continual transformation. It is not concerned with things – certainly not ‘in themselves’ – so much as with things-in-the-making, in James’s famous phrase. It takes change as primary, and sees the regularities of life as temporary barrier islands of stability in stormy seas. This is the first sense in which the process philosophy take on affect carries a political dimension: what it is primarily about is change. The concept of affect is politically oriented from the get go. But moving it onto a ‘properly’ political register – the arena of social order and reorderings, of settlement and resistance, of

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clampdowns and uprisings – is not automatic. Affect is proto-political. It concerns the first stirrings of the political, flush with the felt intensities of life. Its politics must be brought out. The conceptual project running through this book is to bring out the politicality of affect, constructing for it an expression that honours its processuality.

The immediately political dimension is also built into the base definition of affect informing process approaches like the one enacted through these interviews. This definition, deceptively simple, was formulated by Spinoza: affect is the power ‘to affect and be affected’. This definition recurs throughout the book like a refrain. Each time it occurs, it calls forth helper concepts, in increasing variety. These also recur, and together they begin to weave a conceptual web for thinking through affect. The formula ‘to affect and be affected’ is also proto-political in the sense that it includes relation in the definition. To affect and to be affected is to be open to the world, to be active in it and to be patient for its return activity. This openness is also taken as primary. It is the cutting edge of change. It is through it that things-in-the-making cut their transformational teeth. One always affects and is affected in encounters; which is to say, through events. To begin affectively in change is to begin in relation, and to begin in relation is to begin in the event.

This brief itinerary already illustrates a characteristic of the processual concept of affect that distinguishes it from the general ideas that are the standard currency of thought, and upon which the traditional disciplines of knowledge are built. The concept of affect is

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‘transversal’, in Deleuze and Guattari’s understanding of that term. This means that it cuts across the usual categories. Prime among these are the categories of the subjective and the objective. Although affect is all about intensities of feeling, the feeling process cannot be characterized as exclusively subjective or objective: the encounters through which it passes strike the body as immediately as they stir the mind. It involves subjective qualities as directly as the objects provoking them, or with which they move. It concerns desire as much as what is imperatively given; freedom as much as constraint. Thinking the transversality of affect requires that we fundamentally rethink all of these categories in ways that include them in the event, together. It requires honing concepts for the mutual inclusion in the event of elements usually separated out from it, and from each other. A simple mix and match of received categories is not enough. An integral reforging is necessary. This is complicated by the fact that although affect’s openness is unconfined in the interiority of a subject, to take one of the concepts in need of restaging, it is at the same time formative of subjects. Although affect fundamentally concerns relations in encounter, it is at the same time positively productive of the individualities in relation. In its transversality, affect is strangely polyvalent.

Much of the work of the book is dedicated to laying the polyvalent groundwork for this reforging of concepts, transversal to their usual diametric opposition with each other. Such fellow-travelling concepts as ‘differential affective attunement’, ‘collective individuation’, ‘micropolitics’, ‘thinking-feeling’, ‘bare activity’, ‘ontopower’ and ‘immanent critique’ relay the base

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definition of affect with which the first interview begins. Once they introduce themselves, they wend their way through subsequent interviews, taking on greater conceptual consistency, complexifying the concept of affect as they go. This is what a process-oriented exploration does: complexify its conceptual web as it advances. It tries not to reduce. It tries not to encapsulate. It does not end in an overview. Rather, it works to become more and more adequate to the ongoing complexity of life. This means that it does not arrive at any final answers. It does not even seek solutions. It seeks to re-pose the problems life poses itself, always under transformation. The goal is to arrive at a transformational matrix of concepts apt to continue the open-ended voyage of thinking-feeling life's processual qualities, foregrounding their proto-political dimension and the paths by which it comes to full expression in politics (taking the word in the plural).

The interviews included in this book are not just dialogues. They are themselves encounters. The interlocutors are not just questioners, they are accomplices in thought. The interviews typically took place against the background of preparatory exchanges that primed the thinking they would bring to expression. In some cases (chapters 4 and 5), they arose in the context of active collaborations in processual thinking and its political prolongations. These event-based explorations were carried out in the context of the SenseLab, a 'laboratory for research-creation' based in Montreal that operates transversally between philosophy, creative practice and activism. My years of involvement in the SenseLab have inestimably enriched my thinking, and my life. The encounters and relations I have experienced

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in connection with the SenseLab have been transformative – none more so than those with SenseLab founder Erin Manning, my prime accomplice in thinking (and everything else). This book is dedicated to her.

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Christoph Brunner is a researcher at the Institute for Contemporary Art Research, Zurich University of the Arts, Switzerland. His work addresses the relay between cultural and media theory and current discourses on research-creation. His PhD dissertation, ‘Ecologies of Relation: Collectivity in Art and Media’, investigates new forms of collectivity in aesthetic practices between art, media and activism. In 2012 he co-edited the book

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Erin Manning holds a University Research Chair in Relational Art and Philosophy in the Faculty of Fine Arts at Concordia University, Montreal, Canada. She is also the director of the SenseLab (www.senselab.ca), a laboratory that explores the intersections between art practice and philosophy through the matrix of the sensing body in movement. Her current art practice is centred on large-scale participatory installations that facilitate emergent collectivities. Current art projects are focused on the concept of 'minor gestures' in relation to colour, movement and participation. Publications include *Always More Than One: Individuation's Dance*

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(2013), *Relationscapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy* (2009) and, with Brian Massumi, *Thought in the Act: Passages in the Ecology of Experience* (2014). Forthcoming book projects include a translation of Fernand Deligny's *Les détours de l'agir ou le moindre geste* and a monograph entitled *The Minor Gesture*. She is the founder of the SenseLab and founding editor of *Inflexions: A Journal for Research-Creation*.

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Mary Zournazi is an Australian author, philosopher, film maker and playwright. She teaches at the University of New South Wales, Australia. She is the author of several books including *Hope: New Philosophies for Change* (2003), *Keywords to War* (2007) and, most recently, *Inventing Peace* (2013), which is co-authored with internationally acclaimed German film director Wim Wenders.

The interviews in this book have previously appeared in the following publications:

Chapter 1: *Hope: New Philosophies for Change*. Ed. Mary Zournazi. New York: Routledge; London: Lawrence & Wishart; Sydney: Pluto Press Australia, 2002–3, pp. 210–42.

Chapter 2: *Inflexions: A Journal for Research Creation* (Montréal), no. 3 (October 2009), www.inflexions.org

Chapter 3: *Journal of Philosophy: A Cross-Disciplinary Inquiry* (Katmandu), vol. 7, no. 18 (fall 2013), pp. 64–76, under the original title “Affect, capitalism, and resistance”.

Chapter 4: *Peripeti: Tidsskrift for dramaturgiske studier* (Copenhagen), no. 27 (2012), pp. 89–96 (abridged version).

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Chapter 5: *Ästhetik der Existenz: Lebensformen im Widerstreit*. Ed. Elke Bippus, Jörg Huber and Roberto Negro. Zurich: Institut für Theorie/Edition Vode-meer, 2013, pp. 135–50, under the original title “Fields of Potential: Affective Immediacy, Anxiety, and the Necessities of Life”.

Chapter 6: *Wissen wir, was ein Körper vermag?* Ed. Arno Boehler, Krassimira Kruschkova and Susanne Valerie Granzer. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2014, pp. 23–42.