Forms of Emotion

Human to Nonhuman in Drama, Theatre and Contemporary Performance

Peta Tait

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Chapter 1

Affect theory and performance intention

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1 Affect theory and performance intention

Chapter 1 explores some of the intersections between affect theory about energetic flow and performance theory about felt qualities of 'live' and 'presence'. Recent affect theory, however, delineates affect that is nonemotional and formless and no longer simply interchangeable with emotional feeling, and theoretical approaches eschew the subjective and personal experience that typifies performance. This chapter asserts that both affect and emotional feeling can be distinguished in performance given the divided history of emotional feeling and the distinction in affect theory between bodily sensation and nonhuman energetic movement. These distinctions are initially introduced with Rimini Protokoll's *Uncanny Valley*, which is analyzed subsequently in relation to concepts of impersonal affect and personal emotional feeling in conjunction with Angela Bartram's *Licking Dogs*.

Recent affect theory encompasses human sensitivity to energies, and it generates some compelling concepts. Put simply, new materialist discourse on affect is offering a shorthand way of conceiving of energetic pulsation and movement at a cellular level. These theoretical ideas of affect are important, because they seem to reflect what is physiologically feasible and scientifically accepted in the twenty-first century.

While the recognition of affect within performance reflects innovative thinking, it often subsumes concepts of feeling and sidesteps the divisions such as those between what is natural and cultural and between collective and subjective experience. The feeling arising from aesthetic engagement is recognized as being inherently ideological, connected to the organization and structures of society (Williams 1977). The way feeling is enmeshed in cultural meaning comes to the fore in theatrical performance. Theoretical approaches that deem affect to be unstructured and formless would seem to contradict the way forms of performance reflect artistic intention and social and/or political meaning. Therefore Chapter 1 considers the argument that affect theory is antithetical to concepts of 'intention' (Leys 2011; 2018). It proposes that affect theory and performance theory can be reconciled when differing patterns of feeling are recognized through the ways in which: firstly, performance evokes affect as well as emotional feeling as it gains spectator attention; secondly, a specific production involves artistic and socio-political

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intentions within a general live effect; and thirdly, performance is explained in detached language about presence. A depersonalizing effect in the reception of performance supports a general condition of affect and a precept of intensity.

Distinctions in performance

Rimini Protokoll's *Uncanny Valley* by Stefan Kaegi presented a human-like robot as the performer in a live performance that was also filmed, and remains available online Rimini Protokoll (2018). Opening to a live audience on 4 October 2018, it challenged an assumption that theatrical performance involves the transmission of emotional feeling from performer to spectator and an exchange between them. Instead, *Uncanny Valley* explicitly illustrated theory about the bodily experience of affect in relation to how technology and its energetic movement permeates twenty-first-century human worlds (e.g. Clough 2007b). *Uncanny Valley* involved an 'animatronic double', a life-like robot copy of the actor, Thomas Melle, and this literal replacement encapsulates some of the dilemmas of twenty-first-century technological progress (see below). The robot sat on stage in front of a live audience, with moving lips, face, head and arms and a foot that moved. It was positioned next to a screen that showed interviews with scientists, and its first-person voice described the lives of the actor, Thomas Melle, and the mathematician, Alan Turing. Melle's voiceover said, 'If you've come to see an actor, you're in the wrong place'. There was no live actor and Melle appeared on screen along with scientific experts who are a regular feature of productions by this company, which is renowned for creating immersive participatory performance (Garde and Mumford 2016).

After describing *Uncanny Valley* as a lecture on 'the problem of instability', the voiceover recounted that the sensory space in which a human perceives a life-like robot is called an 'uncanny valley' within science. A cognitive commentary overlaid the electrified computerized stage effects that drew sensory attention and embodied responses. The voiceover then gave an account of the painful emotional experiences of Melle who was treated for manic depression (bipolar disorder), and those of Turing as a homosexual in 1950s England forced to take medication by the authorities. The Rimini Protokoll production separated the visible robot from human audio descriptions of emotional experience. It exemplified the way emotional feeling is not necessarily embodied in theatrical performance that invites cognitive and sensory responses.

Performance involves a set of responses and reactions prior to the process of analyzing that are often difficult to include in an interpretation of cognitive meaning. I viewed the robot in *Uncanny Valley* with surprise and admiration, before I began to cognitively question the ethics of replacing a live actor with a robot – making the human actor obsolete and performance training irrelevant. I also learnt that Turing wrote a treatise on forms in nature as I continued watching *Uncanny Valley* with both curiosity and trepidation. The bodily processes of viewing performance are frequently outside its analysis, except that Rimini Protokoll's production clearly associated an idea of the uncanny with its use of technology. In his exploration of the uncanny double created by a screen image of an actor who is live on stage, Matthew Causey considers that the body's subjectivity is split and has been 'extended, challenged and reconfigured' in 'presenting the unpresentable' real (2006: 6, 29). A screen double divides sensory comprehension as it impacts on bodily feeling. The destabilizing uncanny effect of a double is compounded by the simulation of realness with the robot actor in *Uncanny Valley*, which is doubled by Melle's screen image. The uncanny in psychoanalytical analysis refers to a felt psychic quality arising from something familiar that reverses a capacity to reassure, and it is associated with social situations (e.g. Wetherell 2012: 21).

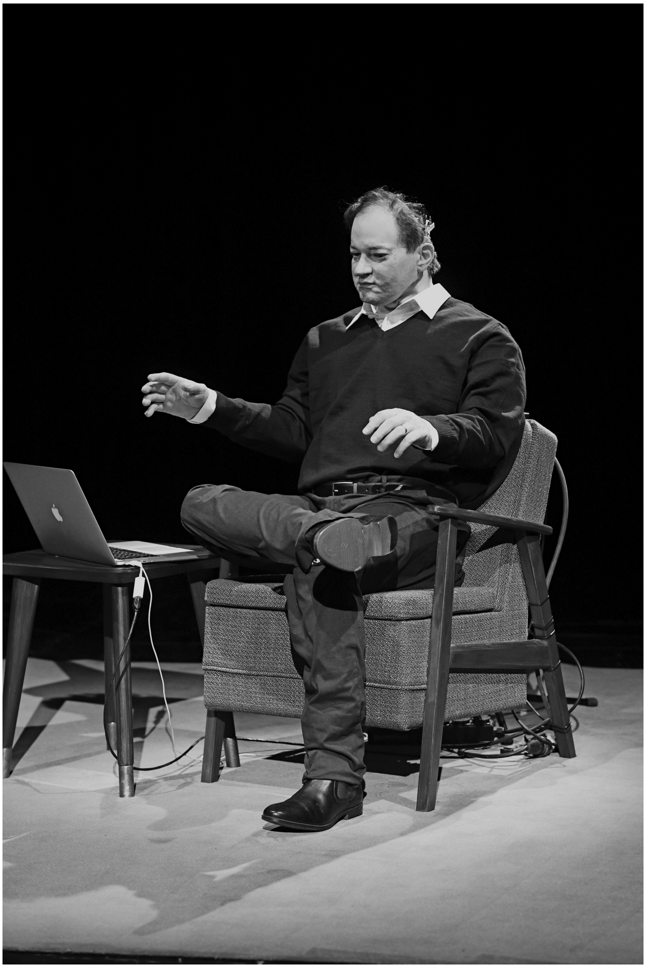

Figure 1.1 Rimini Protokoll (2018), *Uncanny Valley*. Photographer, Gabriela Neeb.

The familiar feels disturbing. The actor figure looked human but the encounter felt strange. The affect arising from viewing the robot double and a perception of the uncanny coincide in *Uncanny Valley*.

A narrative about emotional experience was separated from the visual impact. The voiceover of *Uncanny Valley* also referred to mirror neurons and empathy in human exchanges (see Chapter 5), as the performance suggested the 'he is me' effect of a robot and also seemed emblematic of the demise of the live self. Yet the voiceover describing the painful emotional experience of Melle and Turing implied a partial resolution for Melle's emotional suffering. These personal emotional conditions sit outside affect theory about energetic flow, and theatrical performance commonly sets out to connect with its audience by framing the emotions and emotional feeling within processes of physical and verbal expression and with narrative. *Uncanny Valley*, too, invited emotional feeling with its audio commentary while the robot separately elicited responses.

Rimini Protokoll's production combined affect-inducing energetic circuitry and a humanoid shape that evoked the uncanny. Its exposition about emotional feeling invited other types of feeling, however, to complicate the interpretation. While this discussion of *Uncanny Valley* seeks to reconcile performance theory with affect theory, challenges are posed by subjectively felt responses. A separation of affect and emotional feeling in the discussion of the Rimini Protokoll production reflects a long history of division within explanations of feeling.

Feeling divided

As outlined briefly here, the concept of emotional feeling involves divisions and it has been historically unstable even in a binary with reason. Although affect's previous association with emotional feeling is still evident in scholarship, Chapter 1 refers to the expanded theory about intangible movement and energetic flow and nonemotional sensation. While affect theory offers a twenty-first-century approach, it arises in the shadow of twentieth-century arguments about the emotions in which culture and language interpolate nature and biology (Leys 2018). These arguments about the emotions are relevant to a culturally created form such as performance, and the value of affect theory for performance analysis comes from expanding on existing concepts. A summary of the historical and ongoing divisions in concepts of feeling is presented here to support the use of multiple concepts for emotion in this book, and to facilitate an appreciation of both affect and emotional feeling in theatrical performance (also see Introduction).

Theatre has featured prominently in Western cultural divisions over emotions because the theatrical evocation of emotional feeling was contentious historically. Aristotle argued for the worth of particular emotions inclusive of emotional feelings stimulated by thought within theatre, in contrast to Plato who considered that emotional feeling corrupted reason, and he condemned poetic theatre for its emotional impact (Fortenbaugh 2002: 9) (see Chapter 2). The hierarchical dualism of mind over body identified with Descartes functioned as the dominant Western philosophical framework and sidelined ideas to the contrary, including those of Baruch Spinoza discerning active and passive feelings outside rationality (e.g. Damasio 2003; Reevy 2010: 3). A conceptual separation of bodily emotions as natural and reason as cultural and superior persisted, associated with an expectation of the mental control of emotional passions. Even so, moral philosophers, including Mary Wollstonecraft, sought more nuanced interpretations 'of love in particular, or of emotion in general' (e.g. Mendus 2000: 3). The general word 'emotion' that had appeared in English by the seventeenth century and came into use during the nineteenth century replaced 'passion'. Passion had been extensively demonstrated in theatre, which was considered to have specialized knowledge (Roach 1985). Theatre had continued to be condemned in varying ways because of its emotional impact. For example, Jean-Jacques Rousseau designates nature as being nobler and purer than culture as he condemns the emotions of civilization as degraded, and, following Plato, bans theatre because it will 'weaken' his ideal state (1968: 116). For Rousseau, theatre that appropriately evokes tears had been decadently corrupted and instead audiences leave 'with the edifying reminiscence of having been, in the depths of their hearts, accomplices of the crimes they had seen committed', and it is especially corrupting of women (1968: 46).

Ideas about the naturalness of the emotions developed into a concept of universalism in Western culture. It was extended to nonhuman animals by eighteenth-century philosopher, David Hume (2009), who encompasses both thought and emotions as he discerns attributes of pride and humility and sympathy and gratitude in humans and in nonhuman animals. It was the observational research of Charles Darwin (1999) in 1872, however, that firmly established practices of comparing emotions in humans and nonhuman animals. Darwin models a science of empirically studying the bodily expression and behaviour of nonhuman animals, so that an explanation of evolution and about human manipulation of the nonhuman world (and tool-making) developed in tandem with ideas about the evolutionary development of the emotions. But Darwin's universalizing approach also implicitly undermines belief in the specialness of humanity derived from emotional sensibilities, self-control and will power (Bain 1875). If human emotions are comparable to uncontrollable animal natures, then human distinctiveness relied on a capacity to reason based on intelligence indicated by language – a division that continued within twentieth-century modernism and in science. Irrespective of the ethics of ongoing research with animals, by the late twentieth century, research verifies reasoning by nonhuman animals as well as complex emotional feeling in relation to fairness and even empathy (e.g. de Waal 2010).

Significantly, William James and Carl Lange (1967) argue by 1884 that the physiology of emotional feeling in the human body happens prior to mental apprehension. The dominance of mental capacity was undermined. As part of an ongoing effort to explain emotions, James reset the prevailing order that assumed thought before feeling when he writes: 'My theory, on the contrary, is that *the bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur* is *the emotion*' (1918: 1095, italics in original). He classifies some emotions such as curiosity and love as instincts and other subtler emotions according to their forms. Even though James recognizes that provocation connects to emotional feeling, he argues for rapid internal processes outstripping thought and contends that emotional feeling arises in the body's motor and sensory physiology. This was followed in the 1920s by Walter Cannon's concept of a body-brain-centred flight or fight response that happens more rapidly than the body's other chemical changes (Reevy 2010: 5, 6). Yet, in James's approach, feeling had an association with the qualities of the sensible world, and he contends that the study of the emotions should not ignore 'the *aesthetic* sphere of the mind, its longings, its pleasures and pains' (1967: 11). But his ideas became recognized as constituting a feedback loop. Regardless of any perceived flaws in James's approach, a physiological experience of emotional feeling was being recognized and thereby separated from an idea of – the word for – an emotion in twentieth-century study.

The elevation of physiological responses was challenged by a question about where to locate the stimuli for bodily feeling, which became a central contention during the twentieth century (Parkinson, Fischer and Manstead 2005). To what extent do emotional feelings arise in response to external stimuli including language? At stake is the sequence or order in which feelings arise. Magda Arnold (1960) discerns a cognitive function in the biological appraisal of emotional stimuli (see Chapter 3). In summary, cognitive approaches to the biology of emotional feelings such as those of appraisal theory contend that embodied responses happen within an *a priori* orientation in and to the world. Later appraisal theory holds that cognitive appraisal can precede conscious thought. Nonetheless other twentieth-century fields, including scientific ones, continue to uphold the underlying capacity of biology, and resist the primacy of perspective and positioning. The study of the emotions and emotional feelings becomes divided between investigating the body's physiology and approaches locating the body-self in the world and in cultural language. By the late twentieth century, the study of emotional feeling originating in the physical brain aligns with a larger effort to understand where to locate consciousness, and the mind. At that time, the psychological study of emotional feeling recognizes that it is central to thinking and belief, rather than separate and following after cognition (Forgas 2000b).

Although commonly unified within lived experience, emotional feelings become distinguished from social ideas of the emotions in their twentieth-century study, including within neuro-scientific study of the brain (e.g. Panksepp 1998; Damasio 2004). The demarcation of different types of bodily feeling had been long accommodated in philosophical reasoning by the distinction between thirst and hunger and the emotional feelings, which are less easily separated and explained, and therefore remain grouped together (Solomon 1977). While thirst is a distinctive bodily sensation, anxiety might not be easily distinguished from a stronger emotion such as fear. Admittedly, these categories do not always remain distinctive since thirst can cause anxiety.

The challenge to twentieth-century claims about universality in the biology of emotional feeling initially came from criticism of the design of cross-cultural psychological studies that used photographs of posed facial expressions, which did not necessarily prove the case. They confirmed expressive capacity if not a fundamental biological sameness. In addition, it was recognized that in conforming to expectations for emotional expression within a society and to the rules governing observable expression, and separating skin changes from other physiological bodily change, even so-called biological emotional feelings such as fear, anger and love, could be socially masked (Ekman 1999). The contradictions between involuntary physiological responses and associated drives including sexual drives versus socially induced responses were instead addressed by creating a division between basic primary emotional feelings – which vary in number from six to eight – and socially induced secondary emotional feelings. If this two-tiered separation complicates efforts to generalize about the universality of emotions and emotional feelings, it offered a way forward in the division between natural biology versus culturally shaped feeling. By the mid-1990s, efforts to reconcile the divergent positions in the nature versus culture debates about the stimulation of emotional feeling were addressing complex questions about the biological intersections of emotional experience within social conditioning (Ekman and Davidson 1994). As he analyses categorization, James Averill asks: '[d]oes being basic refer to a logical feature of a classification scheme, or does it also say something about the objects classified? I would argue in favour of the former, at least as far as emotions are concerned' (1994a: 7). Averill supports ideas of syndromes and argues that classificatory division between, for example, basic and social fear is, to some extent, arbitrary. The classifier's interpretation is implicated in a process of general classification and of specific emotions.

The adherence to social rules in different cultures, however, did not completely satisfy the longstanding division in study of the emotions between a unifying universality and a separating cultural divergence. A significant schism emerged in the 1980s over the assumption that human emotional feelings are biologically natural as anthropological and other studies were finding cultural specificity beyond that of social rules for appropriate expression. Jan Plamper points out that travellers had written about cultural difference in feelings from the 1700s, and these were probed in twentieth-century anthropology by, for example, Clifford Geertz and Margaret Mead (2015: 80, 81, 88). Studies during the 1980s began to centre on social constructivism. Anthropologist, Michelle Rosaldo (1980), progresses earlier disciplinary ideas about cultural expression by recognizing specific difference in actual feeling and in the subjective experience of the body-self, together with recognition of the influence of the feelings of the researcher. Sociologist, Arlie Hochschild (1983), investigates the commercialization and management of emotions in Western culture by studying expectations that workers should feel the feelings displayed within service industries, and her work establishes the fields that study the organization of emotions in the workplace and in the family. Historians, Carol Stearns and Peter Stearns (1986), find noticeable social modification in the differing standards for the control of anger in the history of emotions. The cultural construction of emotional feeling and its meaning also recognizes social divergence in gendered expression, and Catherine Lutz (1988) discerns unnatural emotions. Lutz recognizes that femininity is associated with emotional feeling in Western culture because of the public–private split and gendered domestic sphere. This is not necessarily happening in other cultures where strong emotional feeling can be masculine, and not individualized, and that cultural practices vary for women (e.g. Abu-Lughod 1986; Grima 1992; Lupton 1998). In circular reasoning, women in Western culture were historically attributed more awareness of emotions because of social expectations of gendered emotional sensitivity. Greater attention was accorded female self-feeling, and responsiveness to the feelings of others.

Culturally specific studies of emotional feeling diverge from scientific approaches investigating physiological emotional systems of the (animal) brain–body. Linguistic variation reveals that an emotion such as love in English has multiple words in other cultures that do not translate easily, and groupings of specific emotions vary, and a culture can emphasize some emotions and not others. Margot Lyon (1995), however, argues for the centrality of the body and embodied power relations in the cultural analysis of emotion. Other research elaborates on some of the ways in which bodily feeling develops differently between cultures (e.g. Csordas 1994). Generalization about the biology of emotional feelings became problematic once studies began to recognize cultural difference in physiological responses (e.g. Jenkins and Valiente 1994). This raises the possibility that individual variability is compounded by difference between cultures, and studies expose considerable variability in the experience of embodied feeling, and interpretations accommodate cultural, racial, gender and sexual differences by the late twentieth century. The politics of identity became integral to the analysis of difference in the emotions (e.g. Ahmed 2004).

The attribution of moral dimensions to the emotions, however, does show historical continuity in Western culture and continues to be viable. Even the effort to reconcile biological universalism and social constructivism may have antecedents in culture's instability and moral inclusivity until the Enlightenment, when ideas of nature, the nonhuman animal and the environment became more clearly separated from the human (Thomas 1984; Plamper 2015: 5, 6). It remained possible to emphasize the social function of decision-making in relation to individual experiences of feeling, notably in the disciplines of philosophy and psychology (and theatre) that pose moral questions about emotional responses (Goldie 2000; Parkinson, Fischer and Manstead 2005; Escolme 2014). A basic definition of feeling implies that it needs to be recognized by the self, and there is widespread acceptance that emotions are 'intentional states' about something (Goldie 2000; Parkinson, Fischer and Manstead 2005: 10). Behaviour associated with the emotions could be identified with moral norms among humans even though the social circumstances, language and bodily experience of love, anger and fear could differ greatly.

The developments outlined here argue for recognition of cultural development and orientation within emotional responses. They suggest biology is socially shaped with diverse capacities. The significance of identity difference – economic, gender, ethnic, racial and sexual – in the capacity for emotional feeling points to political ideas that implicitly challenge natural sameness and biological determinism. At the same time, recent neuropsychological research finds it difficult to establish consistent biological markers of universality, and finds that divergence is more apparent (Barrett 2018).

The twentieth-century intellectual effort to rethink oppositional discursive categories – such as culture/nature, masculine/feminine, mind/body – also involved the emotions and rational thought or reason (Lutz 1988). Challenges to binary categories highlight the low status of emotional feeling aligned with nature and femininity – a status evident in academic studies until the 1980s, even with a selective focus on studying fear and aggression in nonhuman animals. If the recognition of cultural significance brought more clarity to the emotions, the function of thought and feeling remained obtuse until late-twentieth-century studies discerned that emotional feeling does more than influence cognition and may determine thought and belief (Frijda et al. 2000a; Forgas 2000b). Subsequently affect theory expands on such possibilities by recognizing that bodily sensation accompanies thought.

Theories about the cultural construction of emotion are particularly suited to creative and analytical practices in relation to literature, cinema and theatrical performance. Live and screen performance correspond readily with concepts of constructed emotion as performers and texts reproduce culturally recognizable emotions and emotional feelings. Accordingly, distinctions are made between emotional feeling and other types of feeling in the study of theatrical performance (e.g. Welton 2012) and in cinematic studies that contrast visceral sensation with an emotionally moving impact (Plantinga 2009). An emotionally felt response in performance is caught up in a complex process of translation when the performer does not feel that specific feeling. Linguistic studies highlight how spoken claims for emotional feeling encapsulate complexity in social understanding, and it is metaphors which often typify colloquial claims such as 'feelings run through my body' (see Chapter 3). Descriptions of emotion suggest sensations of movement.

The twentieth-century separation of the emotions and physiologies of emotional feeling is replicated in a bipartite distinction between culturally prescribed emotional feeling and nondiscursive affect. The varied and confusing use of the word 'affect' in relation to 'feeling' and 'emotional feeling' means that these two areas are separated in this discussion as far as possible. Theatrical performance reflects social languages as it contributes to them, and its impact arises from how the material elements are assembled, and together elicit less tangible responses, although it is often assumed that feeling is conveyed bodily with physical and spoken modes. In turn, spectator feeling involves bodily honed cognitive and sensory processes in response to theatrical languages and their interpretation. Performance and its analysis reflect the knowledge of, and beliefs about, bodily feeling that circulate in society. While the cultural shaping of emotional feeling aligns with artistic effect, affect is theorized as defying division, and therefore cultural intent, and modes of containment.

Affect currents

Despite an expanded concept of affect, a tendency to use 'affect' interchangeably to mean 'emotional feeling' persists. As Brian Massumi writes, '[a]ffect is most often used loosely as a synonym for emotion' and to mean emotional feeling in representational forms as 'qualified intensity' (2002: 27, 28). He considers that affect should not be restricted to being a signifying form for the emotions (2002: 35). Massumi's approach supports claims for process and motion, and because the theory of affect seeks to reflect the unities of matter and its energies rather than separation.

Teresa Brennan, however, defines affects as 'the things that one feels', using 'affect' as a descriptive noun, a result of an unfolding active condition of feeling (2004: 23). This distinction allows an affective process to happen bodily. But in her explanation of transmission, Brennan also argues against the way 'affect' is used as the umbrella term for feeling and for 'moods, sentiments, and emotions' (2004: 5), and against making 'affects' and 'emotional feelings' interchangeable. Feelings interpret 'sensory information' and are sensations (Brennan 2004: 5). An awareness of affect can develop when resistance is encountered. Brennan's analysis does have a specific application in therapeutic engagement, even though 'affect' is less specific and more open-ended and Brennan suggests Freudian approaches have been more focused on drives than affects of felt sensation (2004: 34). Part of the reason for Brennan's separation of affect from emotional feeling is to argue for affect's permeability and perceptibility and for an impersonal dimension within the physical space. Lauren Berlant accepts the Lacanian-influenced ideas of Brennan and Deleuzian-influenced ideas of Massumi to contend that 'affective atmospheres are shared, not solitary, and that bodies are continuously busy judging their environments and responding' (2011: 15). Affect unifies embodied experience and the surroundings.

Affect theory reflects an effort to integrate the body and mind in the connections between consciousness and physiology, to counteract their separation. Brennan discerns that 'the transmission of affect' has interpersonal dimensions but that 'no-one really knows how it happens' in the convergence of social, psychological and physiological factors (2004: 2). Brennan claims it is 'socially induced affect that changes our biology' (2004: 1, 2). It is clearly intersubjective, even contagious, in Brennan's approach (2004: 67). This process is similar to, but not the same as 'nervous entrainment', when one nervous system impacts on another (Brennan 2004: 70, 71).

A philosophical impulse to encompass the energetic dynamism that surrounds and moves across bodies and material forms reflects what is scientifically known about the movement and action of the particle world. The approach rescinds separation with 'resonating levels' of 'mind and body', 'volition and cognition', 'expectation and suspense, body depth and epidermis, past and future, action and reaction, happiness and sadness, quiescence and arousal, passivity and activity' and finds a 'point of emergence' and a 'vanishing point' in affect (Massumi 2002: 33). Affect can be grasped through intersecting layers, levels and energies.

As Stephanie Trigg (2016) explains, affect accounts for an encompassing flow of feeling that is not reliant on awareness or communication. Instead unifying affect refers to the 'embodied, sensate aspect of mental and emotional activity' that can be given 'ontological priority' as 'bodily, cerebral or endocrinal activity' (blushing) and can be applied also to a 'network of forces', including drives and motivations, and be indicative of 'collective social feeling' (Trigg 2016: 49, 50). Even though affect is not reliant on thought, the philosophical trajectory goes back through Bergson's concept of an inhibiting consciousness combined with Spinoza's explanation of how 'it is only when the idea of the affection is doubled by an *idea of the idea of the affection* that it attains the level of conscious reflection' (Massumi 2002: 31, italics in original).

In response to Deleuze's idea of affect, Massumi concurs that 'intensity will be equated with affect' and suggests it provides a way of thinking about how sensation is experienced (2002: 27). Even as it defies (or resists) language and potentially eludes comprehension, affect coincides with material culture. Affect can infer a link between the electric impulses of the human brain and electrified circuits although gauging intensity suggests a comparative interpretation and relational positioning. It remains unclear if receptivity to affect is biologically inherent and/or developed through cultural conditioning – as is argued about emotional feeling.

Importantly, Massumi argues that affective feeling is real and that affect is fundamental to understanding social engagement and virtual worlds in the twenty-first century (2002: 42). He argues for the movement of intangible affect in a political context and expressly so in later work (Massumi 2010). The designation of unstructured affect that may have a political impact is intriguing because it implies affect coincides with a purposeful effect if not control of the material surroundings.

In summary, affect is the result of an affective process. On the one hand, affect is being used to explain embodied sensation, and sensitivity to human and communal feeling and to an atmosphere, a shared environment. On the other hand, affect theory locates the human body within larger currents and flows moving across and through material domains and entities, so affect is impersonal and indicates an inseparable connection with the surroundings. Both conceptualizations involve intensity even though intensity presumes recognizing increased strength. The second conceptualization extends affect beyond human worlds – that is, affect is nonhuman. It suggests an affective condition that is omnipresent. Clearly affect is being used for intangible qualities within life. The ways in which affect is gauged through bodily sensation in the first conceptualization seem more applicable to the contained experience of theatrical performance, while allowing for its depiction of the more abstract second conceptualization of nonhuman affect and its unifying potential.

Although they eschew a generalized theory of affect, nonetheless Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg offer a Deleuzian-inspired description of affect as happening through 'intensities that pass body to body (human, nonhuman …)' in relation to an ontological idea of becoming (2010: 1). They write that affect happens (shimmers) through '*in between-ness*: in the capacities to act and be acted upon' (Seigworth and Gregg 2010: 1). Affect can arise between bodies, in body-to-body exchanges and intruding in fleeting or sustained ways as 'intensities' which can be 'visceral forces' rather than 'conscious knowing' (Seigworth and Gregg 2010: 1). Affect offers a comprehensive idea of the energetic dimensions of human life if not expressly also in the effort of thinking. It moves through 'intracellular divulgences of sinew, tissue, and gut economies, and the vaporous evanescences of the incorporeal' as a life force equivalent but one also evident in decomposition (Seigworth and Gregg 2010: 2). This use of affect to mean bodily life encourages a myriad of open-ended interpretations. Seigworth and Gregg break down theoretical approaches and theorists of affect into eight categories while acknowledging that affect theory attempts to get beyond categorization (2010: 6–8). Emotions and emotional feelings are relegated to one category. (Can emotional feeling be contained in this way?) Affect theory is less concerned with human subject–object relations as it offers a unified sense of a world.

An active energetic flow of affect exists outside self-generated feeling. The immensity of this generalized condition of affect corresponds with developments in scientific understanding of the inorganic and organic world and twenty-first-century technological advances. Recent affect theory offers a philosophical approach that situates humans within the energetic realm of physics and processes of constant exchange within biological matter. This seems crucially important for challenging the belief that the human is separate from the nonhuman world.

Contested intentions

Poststructuralist approaches that encompass sensate feeling seek to replace the separation of thought and feeling with affective fluidity. Affect theory proposes unification as it points to a theory of everything.

Ruth Leys (2011; 2018) argues, however, that unexamined assumptions within the theory of affect need to be unravelled because these undermine claims for political efficacy and challenges to power. Leys brings the discussion of affect back to disciplinary distinctions as she argues that the division between universal versus constructed emotion reappears in another guise in recent affect theory as anti-intention versus intention. Therefore affect theory offers an alternative to, rather than a resolution of, the polarized divisions of nature versus culture carrying over from the twentieth century. Affect is not only uncontrollable, but it is also happening beyond the level of conscious awareness. It is subliminal and potentially outside even the cognitive perception nominated by appraisal theory. Cognitive deliberation or intention as it is experienced and thought becomes subordinate to a noncognitive realm without intention (Leys 2018). There is a philosophical argument for an intentional process even at an evolutionary biological level that is acknowledged as either descriptive or directive, and the overall implicit intention is survival (Price 2015: 109, 110).

Leys's criticisms become relevant to interpretations of affect in performance. While live performance elicits felt responses alongside cognitive ones, it is artistic intention that elicits spectator attention or at least orientates it. Artistic forms are purposeful.

Leys is pointing out that the discussion of affect in the humanities seems to be replicating the older position of unthinking emotionally felt responses – also associated with nonhuman animals. The concept of a general dynamic field that influences behaviour without cognitive intervention seems to work against its social efficacy, and Leys's political criticisms echo Hannah Arendt's (and Brecht's) critical emphasis on reason over emotional feeling (see Chapter 5). Affect theory about the flows and energetic movement at a cellular level encompasses human bodies but presupposes felt responses outside comprehension. Body–brain chemical reactions that are not consciously perceived remain susceptible to being controlled. Moreover, Leys is arguing that affect theory aligns with the earlier twentieth-century presumption that basic emotional feelings are biologically hard-wired. In considering scientific sources presented in affect theory, Leys (2011) notes the absence of a range of disciplinary paradigms on feeling. She summarizes the recent position of affect studies as: 'The claim is that we human beings are corporeal creatures imbued with subliminal affective intensities and resonances that so decisively influence or condition our political and other beliefs that we ignore those affective intensities and resonances at our peril – not only because doing so leads us to underestimate the political harm that the deliberate manipulation of our affective lives can do' (Leys 2011: 436). Leys finds affect implicitly outlines an idea of universal unknowing.

Leys (2018) suggests affect theory aligns with scientific study that is universalist in its unifying precepts. Processes of feeling that have been prioritized since James can imply involuntary physiological responses. Leys tracks the influence of Darwin, James and Silvan Tomkins's noncognitive affect research on Paul Ekman, Carroll Izard and Paul Griffiths, and opposing views coming from Rom Harré, Robert Solomon, Martha Nussbaum and Richard Lazarus advocating the 'intentionality of the emotions' (2018: 5). The work of these influential researchers from different disciplines is being located within twentieth-century debates about constructed versus natural emotions. The arguments revolve around what are termed 'subpersonal' bodily processes and reflexes and feelings that do not seem to have causes and animal science about the limbic brain and the amygdala (Leys 2018: 6). While the universalist position recognizes cultural pluralism, it unifies human physiology. Leys argues that it omits 'intentionality', the evaluative, and rational cognition, belief and desire in feeling (Leys 2018: 9).

In a somewhat provocative grouping, Damasio's neuroscientific approach is grouped with the approach of Tomkins, who describes innate emotional capacity but recognizes culturally learned scripts, and with Ekman's research on the facial recognition of basic emotions and social rules. Then Leys suggests that these coincide with the Deleuzian-derived approach to affect which functions in dialogue with science because there is a '*shared anti-intentionalism*' (2011: 443, italics in original). Leys argues: 'What the new affect theorists and the neuroscientists share is a commitment to the idea that there is a gap between the subject's affects and its cognition or appraisal of the affective situation or object, such that its cognition and thinking comes "too late" for reasons, beliefs, intentions, and meanings to play the role in action and behaviour usually accorded to them' (2011: 443). Leys warns that the concept of affect has echoes of the objective or neutral mid-twentieth-century science that potentially allows for sectarian interference and social manipulation. Yet cultural factors are recognized in scientific ideas and Damasio's (2004) approach makes a distinction between the emotions and physiological emotional feeling in scientific study. These approaches seem more nuanced than Leys's grouping implies.

Certainly, a singular concept of affect, which is outside awareness, detracts from the scope of conscious processes. As well, the redemptive possibility of consciously changing or forestalling emotionally felt responses becomes obscured in the broad energetic framework of affect theory. Leys is making the point that subliminal affect and 'affective processes occur independently of intention or meaning' as 'nonintentional, bodily reactions' (2011: 437). This brings to the fore the longstanding concern with sequencing in studies of emotions and emotional feeling (also see Chapter 3). The rethinking of affect can be compared with how 'appraisal theorists' nominate the importance of orientation towards stimuli and habituated patterns of attention to what are termed objects in the world and the rapid engagement that determines felt responses (Leys 2011: 437). But when affect is considered to underlie all other felt responses, Leys argues, recent theoretical scholarship may have inadvertently become aligned with ideas of involuntary responses like those evident prior to the advent of appraisal theory.

Lisa Blackman reiterates that '"the turn to affect" is often positioned as a counter to the psychological subject' and bypasses cognition and emotional feeling (Blackman 2012: 15). She explains that affect theory reflects a trend of theorizing the 'affective energies and creative motion' of the body and characterizes bodies 'by movement and process' (Blackman 2012: 1). Ideas of the body expanded concepts of a natural entity towards the end of the twentieth century, so that a fixed singular body was reframed as porous and unstable. In supporting affect theory, Blackman identifies, however, that there are contradictory tensions since 'our theorizations of affect require attending to the models of subjectivity that we implicitly and sometimes explicitly invoke' (2012: 1).

Explanations of affective bodily feeling encompass sensory responses, but reject a subjective centre. Leys (2018) suggests that the notion of sensing can be more developed, and she argues that embodied cognition is embedded within the world and inseparable from sensory engagement. According to Leys, the body within affect theory is described as being governed by 'affective intensities and resonances' independent of ideology and carried along by a 'formless, unstructured, nonsignifying force or "intensity"' that is prepersonal or subpersonal (2018: 309, 313). She disputes the idea of an ungoverned body and its 'action and behaviour' happening outside 'mindedness' (Leys 2018: 315). Another point of divergence for intentional versus nonintentional revolves on whether embodied responses involve accumulated experience and understanding, and Leys is concerned with what affect means for human capacity for accumulated social development and political change in general.

The use of affect in relation to performance needs clarification since affect theory can seem at odds with artistic intention and political purpose. Affect's unifying function needs to be reconciled with how a specific performance intentionally draws spectator attention, and rehearses socio-political possibilities. Therefore affect is being distinguished here from the emotions and emotional feeling that reflect intention. A process of recognizing affect in performance invariably juxtaposes an all-pervasive effect with bodily sensation. As argued, however, there is great value in the conceptualization of affect that unifies human and nonhuman.

Live – in theory

It is the capacity of sensory perception to connect feeling and intentional social meaning that is at stake with the interpretation of affect theory in performance (e.g. Di Benedetto 2010; Alston 2016). While intention does not directly equate with thought in theatrical performance, it does imply a deliberate artistic perspective. Affect does not presume an intentional directed effect, which raises a concern that affect may be unverifiable for performance. Even as the analysis of performance refers to science about the brain–body, affect refers to a wider general field of movement around the body. Moreover affect's receptive body seems different to a responsive body-self, so that both affect and emotional feeling remain feasible in an explanation of political meaning in theatrical performance. In accepting Leys's criticisms, affect might instead sit alongside emotional feeling in performance rather than supersede it. Affect can usefully broaden how performance is interpreted, for example, in acknowledging bodily pulses and surrounding energetic effects. Importantly, an aspect of affect's conceptualization suggests how thought can be accompanied by bodily sensation and *vice versa*.

The materiality of *Uncanny Valley* was more akin to the assemblage that Jen Harvie describes being created by 'an actor-network' of performers, audiences, directors, designers and 'technical crew', a network process indicative of Bruno Latour's actor-network of social processes in lieu of one block entity called society (or theatre) (2013: 17). Spectators responded to what was assembled during the performance although there is a difference between responding to a fully automated robot and an electronic 'puppet' with human operators. *Uncanny Valley* described Turing's test to distinguish a human and a machine as the production brought to mind a wide range of twenty-first-century discourse about artificial intelligence and machines replacing humans. The production reflected the well-established relationship between performance and science (e.g. Shepherd-Barr 2006). Its analysis points to the turn to cognitive science in performance studies (e.g. McConachie and Hart 2006a). It also assumed some familiarity with discursive knowledge about nonhuman technological development, which underpins innovative contemporary performance (Parker-Starbuck 2011).

Uncanny Valley raises philosophical questions about what it means to be energetically alive versus biologically alive, which might seem a relatively straightforward issue of the material composition of a body shape until existing theoretical approaches to live performance are incorporated. Performance analysis encompasses three broad areas that span: textual and artistic production; the audience reception; and performer training. While artistic production and training can be described as putting theory into practice – artistic praxis – commentary on the reception of performance reverses this process by theorizing about practice and its meaning. Theory can encompass theatre in general and a specific production, although commentary that reiterates general principles without a specific performance remains a performance of theory. It might be applicable to every theatrical performance or none.

Performance analysis draws widely on discursive theory and philosophy from other disciplines, including neuroscience, to illuminate the way performance and socio-political worlds intersect (e.g. Striff 2003; Falletti, Sofia and Jacono 2017). Janelle Reinelt and Joseph Roach recognize a dialectic process in discursive applications of 'theory versus practice, history versus theory, dramatic text versus stage performance' in relation to differing artistic forms of performance and their interpretation (1992b: 3). Innovative and original discursive perspectives within performance converge and align with shifts in philosophical thinking (Auslander 2003). This works well – in performance theory.

The assembled aesthetic and embodied components of live and screen performance can be read discursively like a text (Phelan 1993; 2012). While performance studies confirm discursive capacity, the inclusion of affective impact in this process is complicated by an argument as to whether affect is discursive (see Introduction). Moreover a paradigm of dispersed, socially shaped patterns of interpretation is well recognized in audience reception theory (e.g. Bennett 1990; Dolan 2008). The impact of performance will vary according to the economic, racial, sexual and gender experience of a spectator, the cultural background – and discursive knowledge about robots. Accordingly, the recognition of cultural difference assumes that responses are subjective and specific to an individual spectator. At the same time, technologically driven performance presents a multiplicity of subject-bodies and inner and outer surfaces that Jennifer Parker-Starbuck finds disrupt 'the idea of a unitary subject' even as it elicits affect through its effects (2011: 155). Discursive theory about performance recognizes unities, separations and subjectivities in the interpretation of the text.

Performance theory also recognizes that a general live quality encapsulates the experience of the present moment of performance that unfolds to become a type of 'disappearance of its own enactment' (Phelan 1993: 115; Causey 2006; Parker-Starbuck 2011). The live experience of a performance cannot be exactly repeated. While repetition underpins the artistic making and presentation of theatrical performance, it is a momentum of time passing that is being theorized in its live reception. Performance theory points to an ontology of living in an unfolding present. Live art also accommodates filmed performance and documented work (Heathfield 2004), in the way a recorded performance or photograph is viewed live (Phelan 2012). A general quality of liveness emerges within performance. It equates with bodily sensations of aliveness. Performance theory about live is consistent with Jane Bennett's (2010) 'vital materialism', and Mel Chen's (2012) 'animacy' contrasted with the inanimate and deadness.

Liveness in performance seems to overlap with theory about affect in the reception of *Uncanny Valley*. It was received live, but the robot performer was not a living entity. The robot was, however, energized, and capable of inducing viewer affect. In asking if machines can perform, Philip Auslander claims that a humanoid robot belongs in a historical tradition of automata in theatre, given that much performance is repetitive routine, and a machine can 'possess technical performance skills' but not 'interpretative skills' (2006: 91). While the robot in *Uncanny Valley* was received as a human substitute, it was not generic since it replicated a specific body. A human actor was replaced. Melle ostensibly chose to duplicate himself with a 'puppet' to deal with the demand for personal appearances after he published a fictional book about bipolar based on his own experience. The robot prefigured both Melle's personal liberation and the obliteration of the human performer. The production pointed to a longstanding cultural fascination with automatism in performance as well as its capacity to induce anxiety (Goodall 2008). The robot raised ethical concerns about replacing the living performer through both its cognitive content and its unsettling sensory impact. The three-dimensional double rescinded the unique value of the live human in performance.

The uncanny feeling impacted on thought. *Uncanny Valley* exposed the machinery at the back of the human-like Melle robot for the live audience to view after the performance. The electrified circuitry of the robot's head could be contrasted with ideas of the chemical electrical impulses of a biological brain. The Rimini Protokoll mechanism was not hidden, in contrast to that of the robot actor in Japan's Seinendan Theatre Company production, *Sayonara: Android–Human Theatre*, a collaboration with Professor Hiroshi Ishiguro, in which a robotic female form was the carer of a terminally ill young woman in Oriza Hirata's play. As I viewed this production live in August 2011 at Osaka University with colleagues, I had to keep reminding myself that I was watching a robot during the performance as I responded to the human-like performance of emotional behaviour. The female robot seemed to care. I felt with her. Performance theory can interpret energetic bodies and surfaces and align with affect theory, and avoid concepts of subjectivity and felt experience. But I could not ignore the way I responded with feeling to the *Sayonara* robot's caring demeanour as if this was happening separately from cognitively knowing that I was viewing a robot. There were numerous possibilities for interpreting Rimini Protokoll's theatrical production in relation to theatre as an industry, and the nonhuman robot shapes in European industry versus the Japanese development of the humanoid robot for the caring and sex industries, and such interpretations need not acknowledge sensory feeling. Seinendan's robot imitated a bodily demeanour to pass as human while the visible wiring of Rimini Protokoll's robot was exposed at the end. Seinendan's robot simulated theatre's feeling self while *Uncanny Valley* emphasized the disappearance of the live self.

It was the absence of performer aliveness in *Uncanny Valley* that coincided with the uncanny. It prompted the question: to what extent does the energetic dimension of performance rely on a spectator's bodily perception? The sensory experience of performance is a foundational general condition that becomes differentiated by specific productions and contexts (e.g. Di Benedetto 2010). The Melle double visibly evoked a sense of strangeness with its electrified circuitry. But the interpretation exposes a premise of relational positioning: the technological robot viewed by the live human. It denotes bodily sensitivity to a nonhuman entity, which is conceptualized as receptivity to affect. This receptivity concurs with other descriptions of affect (e.g. Alston 2016; Blackman 2012). The intangible qualities of live and uncanny affect that are accessible and shareable in performance are also then linked to its socio-political interpretation.

Affect theory aligns with performance theory about a live quality. But performance forms emanate additional intangible qualities such as those of aesthetic mood. Insofar as mood intersects with a general condition of affect, it is a particular mood that is artistically crafted in performance. Affect theory proposes a mutable condition that is energetically sharable and therefore intersecting with, but varying from, the artistically directed qualities of theatrical performance.

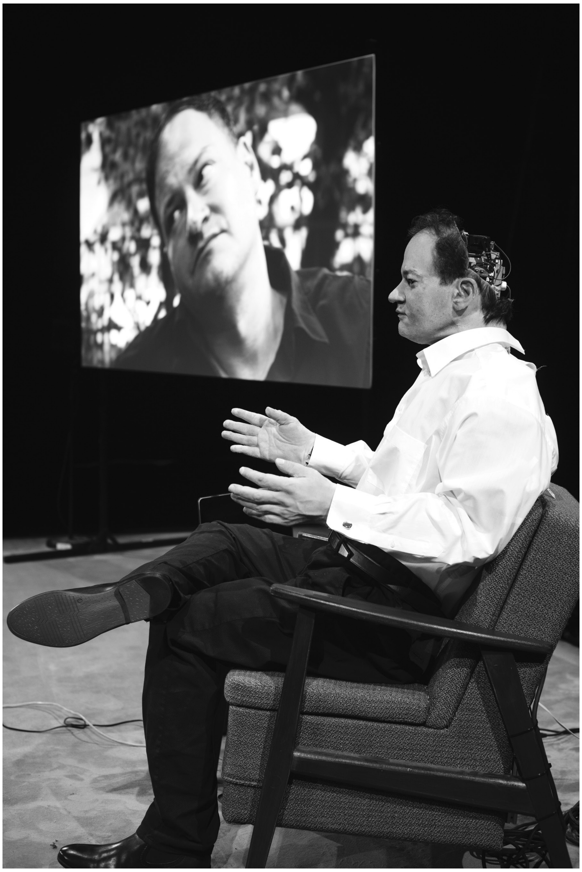

Figure 1.2 Rimini Protokoll (2018), *Uncanny Valley*. Photographer, Gabriela Neeb.

Impersonal affect and personal feeling

The electrified robot in *Uncanny Valley* might have elicited bodily affect as well as an emotional response such as admiration for the replication of Melle's physical appearance. A viewer's bodily response to electronic forms (and in online viewing) might be barely distinguishable from viewer admiration, which differs again from sensations of thought and emotional responses to the biographies of Melle and Turing. In addition, the robot was identity specific in race, gender, nationality and age. As the Rimini Protokoll production evoked affect, it invited subjective responses to a specific human identity. *Uncanny Valley* suggested that impersonal affect and personal emotional feeling are coexistent.

Affect theory is invaluable for thinking about how theatrical performance presents human to nonhuman significance within a wider domain. The conception of affect refers to an expansive energetic flow that aligns with twenty-first-century knowledge and scientific explanations of atomic motion and energetic fields. It denotes a general aliveness of matter as it reveals the underlying interconnection and processes of exchange happening within the environment, whether visible to humans or not. Impersonal affect delineates motion between intangible and material elements; affect's fluidity is dynamic.

It is the issue of human perception of affect that complicates affect theory about the body and active processes. If affect denotes the bodily 'registers of experience' that are intangible, unconscious, 'trans-subjective' and 'impersonal', where is the human self located (Blackman 2012: 2, 3)? As it eschews a subjective centre, impersonal affect sets up a contradictory tension with a personal self. In outlining how Clough's emphasis is technological and includes the biomediated body, Blackman brings the psyche and psychological into her discussion. She is considering body-schema versus body image; that is, how a body feels in contrast to how it looks. She finds that 'body-without-an-image is important for refocusing on bodies' as processes, and even though 'affect does not require a subject' (Blackman 2012: 11, 15). (But does an acknowledgement of intensity presuppose subjectivity?) Blackman argues that psychological subjectivity can manifest an aspect of an affective process through, for example, the placebo effect or hypnosis. A sense of the uncanny can be added.

Performance that presents character psychology implies subjectivity as it invites personal responses from spectators so the possibility of impersonal affect is clearest in the absence of emotional psychologies. As explained, while the robot in *Uncanny Valley* is not performing emotional feeling, there is the potential for personal responses to Melle's and Turing's experiences. The distinction illustrates that a concept of impersonal affect and its processes cannot accommodate all felt experience during a performance. Impersonal affect implies a quality of sameness – in theory – whereas live performance contains diversity in its specific identities and aesthetic qualities. Adam Alston explains that affect theory 'is unable to account for the manipulation of affect production, or for the agency and cooperative endeavour' in performance which also has biographical significance (2016: 42). The diversity of intentions and responses needs to be recognized. At the same time, the collective entity of an audience in a theatre space generates an accumulated effect that seems impersonal–although two thousand audience members elicit a different effect to a hundred. Yet the recognition of the gender, sexual and race identities of performers and of spectators also presumes divergent subjective and personal experience so a theoretical generalization about feeling in performance distorts, even negates, difference.

Performance can evoke bodily sensation that seems impersonal when it is an involuntary response. But a claim for an impersonal effect reiterates the difficulty that besets interpretation; did the other viewers have similar responses? The 2007 *Licking Dogs* online performances by Angela Bartram presented the human performer and a dog, head to head, licking each other for about ten minutes. *Licking Dogs* was both fascinating and disturbing because of the two different body forms in the sustained intimate action of mouth-to-mouth contact. Bartram points out that in performance, 'the performer's "human" familiarity allows the observer to connect with, and understand the effect of the event' through 'living in a similar body' (2012: 103). The sensory process of viewing implicated the substitution of one's own body into the action. It involved phenomenological perception that could make a human viewer aware of his or her (their) tongue or breathing and other sensations and vulnerability. The body-to-body sensory effect of *Licking Dogs* was challenging to view. As well as exploring notions of intimacy and its taboos, Bartram is interested in the animalizing effect of working in close proximity with a nonhuman animal. The positioning of the dog's body upsets notions of species separation as Bartram's performance played with how humans and their pets interact emotionally and with kisses and licks but its intentional sustained spatial practice became transgressive. The performance had an impersonal visceral impact as it evoked a personal human (and dog) response, even squeamishness.

The viewing of the body of another species happened physically and sensorily and potentially also aroused sensations associated with smell and taste even as the sequencing of feeling and self-awareness remains open to conjecture. The process also seemed personal. Alston explains that being viscerally 'affected' within environments implicates 'cognition and corporeality' but also 'intuitive and/or idiosyncratic' responses (2016: 42). He describes a '"biopolitics"' of affect in immersive performance based on personal experience that separates and 'promotes "towardness or awayness" from something or someone' in Sara Ahmed's conceptualization (2016: 43, 46). Impersonal affect coincides with personal feeling in turning away from or towards the action in *Licking Dogs*.

The recognition of impersonal affect alongside personal feeling is part of the effort in this analysis to reconcile a general form with a specific instance, and social language with a subjectively felt response. Impersonal affect in performance need not negate personal responses even as it implies a general condition. Impersonal flows in performance surround form(s) as well as connect with bodily sensation even though attunement to a general condition of affect might be fleeting. A specific (dog) body in *Licking Dogs*, for example, would seem to interrupt the free flow of affect.

Ideas of impersonal affective flow challenge belief in the separation of human and nonhuman and denote connection. But nonhuman affect could arguably also exist in an empty physical space, when it is not reliant on anyone in attendance. This might be an acceptable conclusion for affect theory but not for live performance practice. Instead performance reveals how an impersonal all-pervasive affect intersects with embodied responses.

Presence and transmission

While artistic synthesis and deliberate calculation create the complex physical and metaphorical spaces that evoke audience feeling, such energetic effects in performance are unreliable. The pulsations that energized the *Uncanny Valley* robot may not have been felt. Spectator responses to theatrical performance are variable and an acknowledgement of affect might be insufficient to claim a collective experience. The combined aesthetic elements generate widely differing responses in their reception.

Performers reach out to audiences in energetic ways that are often described with an acknowledgment of 'presence'. To what extent does a performer inhabit an intermediary zone between general affect and subjective feeling? Jane Goodall explains that 'the evolution of a poetics of presence' and 'imagistic language in which presence is evoked in different cultural and historical contexts' can be summarized as '"sensing" a presence' (2008: 7). She finds that commentaries describe an energetic exchange between performers and audiences, and 'presence' denotes a connective force within live theatre. This intangible quality originates with a performer on stage. Theatrical presence encompasses simultaneous dualities of real and fictional, and physical and imaginative spaces, and a perception that a performer with presence can make a stage space seem full (Goodall 2008: 9, 16). While the performer in front of an audience initiates energetic contact and transmission, audience responses facilitate the engagement. It can be a sexually charged engagement. Goodall writes of two types of historical explanation: one derived from 'regimes of training and technical prowess: elocution and vocal technique' with movement, and 'more mysterious qualities of magnetism and mesmerism' (2008: 8). A central tenet of live performance is dynamism between performer and audience in an aural and visual energetic two-way exchange. Hans Gumbrecht also includes 'touch' in the way presence arises in relationship to objects (2012: 6, 7). A sense of touch without contact points to the convergence of the senses in processes of reaching out in theatre. Yet Phelan explains that presence also prefigures doubt about its recognition (1993: 115). Presence would seem to align with the bodily sensations of affect, even as it originates in an individually specific and intentional performance, one also involving emotional expression.

The challenge of explaining presence in performance theory illuminates the difficulty of quantifying what is felt by an audience. But presence is more than a subjectively felt response. Joseph Roach (2007) describes a depersonalized quality he calls 'it' that is evident in the popular draw of celebrities including actors historically who exhibit a type of intensity through the wide appeal of their physical appearance. The demonstration of 'it' emerges from historical records about an individual performer recognized for his or her popularity. Roach writes that '[t]heatrical performance and the social performances that resemble it consist of struggle, the simultaneous experience of mutually exclusive possibilities – truth and illusion, presence and absence, face and mask' (2007: 9). It is contradictory tensions of stage presence and theatrical dualities that create dynamism and attract attention, and encourage audience attentiveness, making a quality of 'it' apparent. Roach discerns that the intensity of 'it' has 'singularity *and* typicality', which create resistances and 'reversible polarities' (2007: 8, 9, italics in original). The quality of 'it' is a depersonalized effect of the contradictory tensions created by specific presence in performance.

Goodall and Roach confirm presence through corroborating accounts by performers, critics and spectators that imply intensity and recognize an appeal that includes the emotional expression and material staging such as the costuming. Emotional expression in performance encourages a unified audience response as a combination of human and nonhuman stage elements contribute to performer presence.

The concepts of 'presence' and 'it' in performance bring to the fore a zone of contact between artistic intention and spectator attention. At best, presence indicates an undivided attentiveness of the live audience that performers recognize happens for a few moments. Goodall's 'presence' and Roach's 'it' become recognizable through a dualistic and contradictory impact that makes theatrical effects compelling. The power over an audience suggests Foucault's ideas of the internalization of power in a spatial and perceptual exchange between spectator and performer. A political meaning emerges from the power to be taken over by (theatrical) presence and this process corresponds with how affect can be apprehended as political (Massumi 2010).

Presence in performance seems compatible with affective energetic flow. But *Uncanny Valley* confirmed that nonhuman objects and materials also draw audience attention – an idea that was reinforced with a mobile spotlight as a 'theatre machine' with the literal capacity to focus attention. Technology and objects in performance show how energetic presence can be impersonal. The energetic presence of human performers, however, arises in conjunction with, but is not the same as, emotional feeling. It suggests that affect and emotional feeling coexist even as personal presence becomes depersonalized.

Resistance

Licking Dogs points to resistance in the affect surrounding human to nonhuman action. Brennan explains that the transmission of affective feeling takes place when someone absorbs the energetic feeling of another (2004: 3). Or, alternatively, transmission does not happen when it encounters resistance. Brennan uses affect transmission to expand on ideas of projection, transference and intersubjectivity; for example, a mother seeking to share the child's experience. She also suggests that smell underlies the transmission of affect, so it is also chemical 'entrainment' and involves sensory responses (Brennan 2004: 68). But this approach to affect suggests resistance can arise in the sensitivity to material practices and human presence, in a refusal to be taken over.

An idea of affect circulating between and around bodies aligns with longstanding ideas about emotional feeling spreading and becoming contagious that track back to Henri Bergson. It matters that emotional feeling can be induced by the feeling of others when, as Ahmed (2004) explains, political change can be based on circulating emotional responses, and spread from body to body and within a group. Affect has what Guattari suggests is a 'sticky' quality, and it moves around with stickiness (1996: 158). By comparison, Nicola Shaughnessy explains how grief in performance transmits with Brennan's idea of '"catchiness"'(2019: 34). Sticky affect and the catching of feeling reflect how these are perceived – and might be scientifically verified in the future.

In her evaluation of Raymond Williams's feeling structures, Berlant recognizes that these may not transmit (2011: 65). Performance is ineffective when it does not engage the viewer, although flatness in performance can also annoy and have an emotional effect. In relation to reader engagement with literature, Susan Feagin explains that the '*absence of a systematically developed vocabulary* to identify feelings is explicable not because they are "pure phenomenology" (whatever that might be), whose varieties are hard to capture in a systematic way, but because of the variability and complexity of the cognitions, perceptions, and apprehensions that are embedded within them' (2012: 648, italics in original). The reader's pleasures include heightened bodily sensation as the text (briefly) absorbs and transfers attention to an associated reality or an escapist one, and Feagin points to the way a reader's engagement is compounded by previous experience of reading texts. Personal experience connects with an artistic form that becomes depersonalized in its social circulation. A reader/spectator can also resist with feeling; accounting for the diverse perspectives of an audience group seems even more complicated.

A concept of 'disinterest' in live performance might imply resistance or neutrality or separation. Performance flatness and spectator disinterest undermine a general claim for performance reception and presence. Alston, however, contends that such disinterest and distancing are not feasible within recent immersive theatre that fuses 'sense-as-feeling and sense-as-meaning' and implicates a '"greatest storm of emotions"' (2016: 47–49). This type of performance involves spectators moving around in the physical space rather than being spatially segregated from the performers.

The analysis of affect in performance encounters the dynamism of the art form, which is conceivably shared in the sense that it is collaboratively created and takes place in the company of others. As subjective reception disrupts a presumption of common experience, a claim for a collective or communal response remains speculative. It is unclear, for example, why some spectators hesitated as they approached the robot form of Thomas Melle after the performance. The generalization about audience responses expanded with late-twentieth-century mapping of neurophysiological capacity that at least confirm long-held suppositions about embodied knowledge and well-established practices within performance training (Kemp 2012). Despite the ubiquitous foundational and questionable animal laboratory studies, neuroscientific investigation of responses to stimuli confirms physiological principles. For example, Gerald Edelman elaborates on William James's ideas of consciousness by proposing that input and neural activity simultaneously create the 'phenomenal transform', the human 'qualia' (2000: 77, 78). Once an activity or response is consciously learned, it becomes automatic (Edelman 2000: 93).

The understanding of physiological timing has been refined through neuroscientific research that offers a general explanation of brain processes. But it does not account for the individual 'I' of the person and diverse responses. Explanations of how different areas of the brain connect with bodily feeling have not resolved the larger argument that physiological reactions are individually shaped within culture. (Can the fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) brain scan be fooled by a mastery of bodily feeling – by an actor's skill?) Instead, the proposition that embodied responsiveness develops differently through orientation within the world can incorporate performance as it potentially disrupts bodily responses that have become automatic.

Live presence and affect theory both nominate a quality of intensity. But intensity in performance suggests progression as performer presence points to an intensity that might or might not be apprehended along with the recognition of emotional feelings. A claim for affect in performance needs to outline how it is known, otherwise affect remains a generalization that carries the implicit associations of a powerful force that is unintentionally created and absorbed. An explanation of energies and activity can suffice for a general description of how affect happens but responses to a specific performance also involve personal perspectives that can lead to resistance.

This consideration of 'live' and 'presence' reveals some of the ways in which a type of depersonalized experience becomes perceptible to audiences – although not easily explicable. These qualities suggest that affect can be recognized along with emotional feeling in relation to intensity. Performance points to oscillating connections between general and specific forms of affect, mood, emotional feeling and the emotions.

Formless affect and aesthetic form

The robot in *Uncanny Valley* said to the live audience, 'you have more freedom than I do'. They were free to move around and implicitly to change in self determined ways, whereas his form was fixed and controlled. Yet the robot also suggested affect freed from biological form. Massumi outlines how affect can be considered 'unformed' and 'unstructured' in that it seeks to escape containment (2002: 260, note 3). The conception of affect as being outside forms and categories suggests a formless condition. Affect's capacity in performance suggests an energetic quality that surrounds expressive forms. The designation of political impact is philosophically intriguing because it implies that affect can be unstructured and still be collectively apprehended (Massumi 2010). Erin Manning describes collective experience emerging out of Gilbert Simondon's ideas of freeing the human from a bodily form and Deleuze's idea of energetic instability unfolding so that '[t]he body in-forms as it multiplies into phases of becoming' (2010: 118). Affect occurs at the nexus of what is being formed.

Affect that is unrestricted would seem to dissipate a quality of intensity, and the *Uncanny Valley* robot also said, 'I'm behaving like you so you can recognize me'. In performance, form focuses spectator attention even though responses will, to some extent, be contingent on pre-existing patterns. Moreover, while affect is theorized as formless, it is being used to consider viewer responses in art and to cinema and also to music and web-based interaction (Grossberg 2010). The reception of performance in theatre, television and cinema becomes affectively immersive when a spectator loses awareness of the immediate surroundings; temporal spatial artistic forms absorb the attention.

The idea of formlessness creates challenges for performance and its intentional effects. The proposition that affect met resistance as it circulated across and through aesthetic forms that also invited emotional feeling became evident in the viewing of *Uncanny Valley* and *Licking Dogs*. A fleeting sensation of affect can be distinguished from other feelings elicited by bodies and nonhuman objects, and because emotionally felt responses to theatrical performance arise more intermittently, and last longer, expanding or contracting through relational engagement. Live performance offers an immediate experience within a durational framework that can be evaluated for the ways in which affect intersects with emotional forms.

The absence of a human performer in *Uncanny Valley* facilitates the recognition of affect and its intensity. While narrative and biography offer a shareable description, it is more difficult to specify energetic aspects of the aesthetic experience even as the uncanny robot form coincided with a politic about human obsolescence. Theatrical performance offers an affective realm that rests on top of – or nested within – a larger affective world. Likewise, personal feeling can be located within a depersonalized effect. While the Deleuzian-influenced theory of affect offers important possibilities for the analysis of aspects of performance, it need not overshadow ideas of live, presence and emotional feeling. The rethinking of live performance reception with affect theory in the twenty-first century can enhance existing theoretical perspectives.

Affect theory allows for an impersonal energetic field that intersects with, or resists material forms. But analysis of affect in performance needs to offer more than energetic presumption. Perspectives on affect often assume that there is a capacity for affect, but as the subsequent chapters reveal about ideas of emotions and emotional feelings and mood, these have distinctive forms within theatrical performance, which deliberately challenge as well as confirm human experience and its political significance.

Unformed affect seems immeasurable. But the consideration of affect in this chapter acknowledges a general energetic effect that circulates within a depersonalizing dimension surrounding personal forms. Bodily sensation becomes recognizable in performance in relation to aesthetic forms and their movement and also through resistance to them. Theatrical performance invites recognition of intangible qualities within processes that also convey social and political implications. It does more than mimic a lived world as it probes the connection between sharable and subjective experience and links abstract general concepts to specific material practice. Performance harnesses affect insofar as it connects with expressive artistic and emotional forms.