Embodying Affect: Voice-hearing, Telepathy, Suggestion and Modelling the Non-conscious

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Abstract This article takes a genealogical approach to the problem of affective communication that we find coalescing around the phenomenon of 'affective transfer' identified in experiences such as voice-hearing, telepathy and hypnotic suggestion. These experiences breach the boundaries between the self and other, inside and outside, and material and immaterial, and make visible some of the central issues that are important in re-thinking affect, relationality and embodiment. The article will attempt to re-engage the problematic of subjectivity by asking what a turn to affect entails within such technologies of listening and attention. This is particularly important when such turning or opening to affect engenders a conversation with traumatic memories, albeit a conversation that does not occur primarily in a verbal register. The key focus will be on the marginalized status of telepathic modalities of affective transfer throughout the histories of the development of the psychological sciences. The article uses this as a platform to consider the connections between what is occluded or excluded from the psychological sciences, and what is being silenced within work on affect taking form across the humanities. Taking us back to the practice of telepathy in the 19th century and the problem of hypnotic suggestion in the mid 20th century (the Macy Conferences), the article discloses how both function as carriers of what is being overlooked and silenced in the engagement by many affect scholars with the knowledge-practices of the psychological and neurosciences.

Keywords assemblages, body, embodiment, James, psychology

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In my previous work on embodiment and voice-hearing (Blackman, 2001), I made an argument that might now be considered part of a discursive approach to the production of bodily matters. This study focused particularly on the kinds of techniques of self-production and understanding that allowed voice-hearers to enact their voices as spirit-entities, abuse-entities, ecological-entities and trauma-entities, for example, rather than as discrete disease-processes (also see Blackman, 2007d). These practices have been successfully cultivated within the Hearing Voices Network, which has had considerable success in helping voice-hearers to accept their voices and manage the experiences without psychiatric intervention. What I want to do in this article is turn my attention to the *affective* dimensions of voice-hearing, which were evident within the study but difficult to account for within the particular Foucauldian analytic I was employing. One example that perplexed me at the time, which is relevant for the focus of this article, was the particular affective workings of practices within the UK Spiritualist Church, which enacted voices as modes of telepathic transfer; that is, the understanding that voices can be heard and transferred between members of the group and even between the living and the dead. The practices which enacted this understanding operated primarily in a non-cognitive realm and were profoundly kinaesthetic in their working. The voice-hearer would subtly shift their attention and focus to feelings, sensations, rhythms and movements which would allow them to attune to the more pre-verbal and intensive dimensions of the voices. This attunement might take place within an associated milieu known as the 'development circle', which connects the group members such that they might experience a flow of energy within the room or particular setting. This is often described as being akin to a state of reverie. The voices move and circulate between group members and the living and the dead and, to that extent, become shared rather than isolated singular experiences. This is a mode of 'being-with' that mediates the voices such that they might be considered intercorporeal and plural where distinct boundaries between the self and other, inside and outside, and material and immaterial dissolve.

Although spiritualist practices might be considered marginal to studies of the relationship between bodies, affect and life, I want to offer another example taken from my study of the phenomenon of voice-hearing that draws out some of the central issues for studying affective relations that I wish to develop in this article. Let us imagine a person who hears voices. This person is an amalgam of people I have met throughout my study and includes factual and fictive elements. This is not important. What is important is that the person hears voices and that these voices can be heard in many different ways; there are many different modalities through which voices can be heard, and these modalities are modulated and

amplified through different technologies of listening and attention (including technologies of attention and listening such as telepathy). The voice-hearer invites an Other to hear the voices with them. This is not surprising given the person hears the voices on an almost continual basis and finds the idea of a third person joining the conversation a welcome relief. The voice-hearer vocalizes the voices in order that the third person can both hear and listen. The person now hearing the voices with the voice-hearer does not pay attention to the content. The content might appear as fragments, as rather meaningless, at times menacing, incomprehensible and bizarre. The third person pays attention to the tone of the voices, the voice-hearer's posture, the 'setting'; how they feel listening to the voices. They will pay attention to the voice's rhythms; are they flowing and connecting, staccato or cutting, chaotic, shifting, immersive, penetrating? The person becomes attuned to the voices and, through 'holding' the voices, allows the voice-hearer to listen to the voices differently, which moves them both beyond the personalized space of subjective affectivity.

This might be called a form of 'enactive witnessing' (Clough, 2009) which does not solely focus on narrativizing the experience, but allows the voices to circulate with an other, to move in their patterns of repetition and compulsion, and through their circulation with an other to disclose the affects which drive their patterns and that hold them together (see Bateson, 2000). This practice is called voice-dialoguing and is part of a micro-technology of listening and attention that has helped voice-hearers within the Hearing Voices Network to hear their voices differently. This practice enables a 'being-with' in an experience that many voice-hearers find isolating, and which allows the circulation of traumatic memories that are, for the most part, unrepresentable, unspeakable and extremely distressing and disturbing. Many voice-hearers within the network have come to see themselves as survivors of sexual abuse. Some can now narrate their experiences and have gone on to become pioneers within the network. However, the ability to narrate the meaning of the voices is not necessarily the primary curative aspect. What seems to be important is the person accepting the voices, that the 'other' is in me, and allowing themselves to be connected and directed to what might be unrepresentable and unknowable; to trauma, shame and interrupted affect which is partial, shared, plural and which co-emerges between voice-hearers and their ghostly interlocutors.

This focus on modalities of listening and attention, such as voice-hearing, which operate by 'affective or telepathic transfer', shifts our focus to the relationship between bodies, affect and *trauma*. This requires a decoupling of memory, perception, the senses and the psyche from a bounded, singular and distinctly human body, and the development of an analytic that can engage with the

intergenerational and intercorporeal transmission of trauma, the status of the non-knowing[1] or non-conscious in our theorizations, and the importance of attending to experiences and practices which challenge the foundational model of autonomous subjectivity at the heart of the psychological sciences. The voices can be materialized through particular technologies of inscription such as neuro-imaging scans, and can even be located within the right temporal-parietal lobe, showing the capacity of the right brain not only for psychological attunement, but also for registering the affects of others. This part of the brain registers the capacity for bodies to share affects much like mirror neurons, but this sharing is not the harmonious sharing of a preverbal register of intensities between caregiver and child (Stern, 1985). This sharing is the sharing of affects, where one person is required to deny their agency and the other potentially to deny their dependency – the *folie à deux* that signals the co-constitutive, partial, shared traumatic affects that co-emerge between subjects, and that the voices are the affective carriers of.

This experience disrupts the metaphor of continual becoming often invoked within more Deleuzian-inspired studies of affect, and points towards the importance of understanding and being able to describe and analyse the way bodies become linked at a psychic level, where affects are shared, including the trauma and desires of others. This linking does not simply disclose the movement of intensive energies, but the complex dynamics and defensive organization that drives these patterns of information, much like the *Knots* that R.D. Laing so poetically described (Blackman, 2008a; Laing, 1970). Bracha Ettinger (2006) uses the concept of 'border-linking' to describe these affective processes, and points towards the importance of re-inventing our understandings of the psyche in light of work on affect. Grace M. Cho's (2008) fascinating book on intergenerational haunting does this beautifully through her consideration of the voices and memories that speak through her as a second-generation Korean-American. These are transmitted through her mother's silence, emblematic of the trauma of a generation of Korean immigrants to America that becomes unknowable and unspeakable. This work, along with work on trauma and performance (see Blackman, forthcoming a; Hamera, 2005), enactive witnessing (Clough, 2009) and the community-ego (see Walkerdine, this issue), point towards some important ways of examining affective processes that deserve attention in light of this.

The link between affect and life is often made through the concept of *movement*; where the possibilities for enhancing or expanding life are aligned to the flow of intensive energies or affects which traverse, connect and disrupt the borders and supposed boundaries between bodies, human and non-human. These understandings shift our focus away from anthropocentric notions of corporeality to explore how boundaries between human and non-human bodies

are continually being drawn and re-made within specific practices and technologies (Barad, 2007; Haraway, 2008). This entails a move away from discussions of subjectivity framed through epistemological concerns, to discussions of ontology framed by many as a turn to an informational paradigm (Clough, 2004; Clough with Halley, 2007). As Clough suggests, the move away from representation and discursive understandings of bodies to informational concepts allows a redefinition of the 'volatile ontology of bodies' (2004: 11), as well as focusing attention on the dynamism of matter (see also Barad, 2007).

The compelling nature of the paradigms of life and affect are held in their invitation or promise to explore potentials (for change) and mutability,[2] as well as offering frameworks for exploring how affective potentials are orchestrated, amplified and modulated through technologies of advanced capitalism (Blackman, 2007a; Clough, 2004; Clough et al., 2007a, 2007b; Terranova, 2004; Thrift, 2007). Frameworks for exploring such modulations are increasingly being derived from the life and biological sciences. As Terranova (2004) suggests, what are viewed as non-deterministic approaches to materiality are providing renewed opportunities for humanities scholars to forge alliances with the natural and human sciences. As she asks: 'Is it possible to draw on scientific concepts to further our understanding of cultural processes?' (2004: 51). The question of whether and how to forge alliances between the humanities and the human and life sciences is, of course, not new, even if there is apparently something distinctive about the present conjuncture which brings the potentiality of possible collaborations sharply into focus (Angel, 2005; Cromby, 2007).[3]

This article will consider two rather distinct attempts at collaboration across the life and biological sciences and the humanities, which were both focused in relation to what I will term the 'problem of affective transfer'. The conjuncture that has caught the attention of humanities scholars has been the concerted efforts at inter- or trans-disciplinarity forged at the Macy Conferences held between 1946 and 1953 (Hayles, 1999; Heransgegeben, 2003; Orr, 2006). Before I consider this conjuncture I want to turn to some hundred years ago, a time which also provided opportunities for cross-pollination and trans-disciplinary collaboration in relation to the 'problem of affective transfer'. This context brought together scientists, engineers, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, medical doctors, physicists, spiritualists and psychiatrists to discuss the 'problem of telepathy'. This problem was articulated through a concern with forms of communication that crossed borders and boundaries between the human and the non-human, the material and the ephemeral, the self and the not-self, and the living and the dead. This problem was articulated through a model of affective or telepathic transfer, where subjects were defined through their capacities to

affect and be affected. Although affective transfer, in the context of technologies of hypnotic suggestion, has received some attention from humanities scholars (Borch, 2006; Orr, 2006; Thrift, 2007), the problem of telepathy as a mode of affective transfer has not been given the attention it deserves. Telepathic modalities of hearing and listening have been marginalized within studies of affect, which have tended to move to more mainstream psychological and neuroscientific explanations to diagram (Massumi, 2002) or analyse corporeality as offering up the potential for mediation (Wegenstein, 2006).

I will argue that a consideration of the ways in which models of affective transfer found in practices of telepathy, hypnotic suggestion and voice-hearing were taken up and transformed within the psychological sciences is important for how we might understand affect and corporeality in the present. These technologies of attention and listening allowed memory, perception, the senses and the psyche to be decoupled from a bounded, singular and distinctly human body, and the foregrounding of an examination of practices that were considered marginal, exceptional and – by many – to be a sign of pathology or irrational perception. In many cases these practices enabled an opening out to trauma; whether the trauma of mortality and bereavement, traumatic memories that may be modulated through hypnotic suggestion, or the hearing of voices that connect the subject to that which might be unrepresentable or unknowable. One such practice was the practice of telepathy, which involved the body, usually of the female medium, enacting particular communications with the ghostly hauntings and fragmentary voices of the dead (see Blackman, 2007c). Although this might be considered a marginal practice in the present, we will see how telepathy was an important practice for positivist science in the 19th century. In the next section I will consider how the problem of telepathy became a 'hybrid object' (Luckhurst, 2002), allowing links to be made between a diverse array of practices, artefacts, knowledges, institutions, populations and modes of governance, around which distinctions between self and other, living and non-living, material and immaterial, and the corporeal and incorporeal were made and re-made.

Performing Telepathy

> It ties together many heterogeneous places of knowledge: the Royal Society and the East End spiritualistic séance, the British Museum and the Spiritual Institute, the Cavendish laboratory in Cambridge and mesmerized Irish peasantry in Westmeath, the drawing room of Erasmus Darwin and Brighton seafront conjurors. It hooks up a diverse set of knowledges and social practices; cable telegraphy, physical and stage illusionism, energy physics, psychology and the mass-market Christmas ghost story, anthropology, neurology, and the politics of imperial federation. (Luckhurst, 2002: 10)

Luckhurst argues, in a fascinating genealogy of telepathy, that, as a 19th-century concept, telepathy emerged and was distributed across a range of heterogeneous sites, binding and entangling a remarkable diversity of entities, actors and agencies, anomalous problems and practices. The assemblages through which telepathy took form as an object were aligned through their concern with communication that was seen to take place at a distance, 'without the operation of the recognised sense organs' (2002: 60). Telepathy was thus a boundary object, which crossed and disrupted borders on many fronts; providing an entanglement of productive cross-fertilization, and a corresponding archive of fears, fetishes and phobias that surrounded possible connections between the human and non-human, the material and ephemeral, the living and the dead, and the sane and the insane. Luckhurst cogently shows how concerns with occult and hypnotic phenomena aligned most 'men of science', including Francis Galton (1892), the cousin of Charles Darwin; both attended mediumistic séances alongside many of their contemporaries and expressed ambivalences and hesitancies concerning the phenomena they witnessed.[4]

Scientific concerns with psychical phenomena were given an institutional setting with the emergence of the Society for Psychical Research in the UK in 1882, and the establishment of the *Journal for Psychical Research*, which published the many and varied stagings of such phenomena that took and indeed still take place today (Luckhurst, 2002). The Society provided an infrastructure and focus for such activities, serving as a nodal point for the entanglements of various technologies of observation and measurement, a range of imputed agencies of transmission, the spiritualistic movement and particular mediums of notoriety – which were brought together and enacted as particular kinds of objects and entities through the principles of scientific naturalism. This was not the straightforward embracing of metaphysics, but rather performed on the basis that the apparent immateriality of bodies was a matter of matter.[5] As Luckhurst (2002: 59) suggests: 'There were only anomalous events which awaited inscription within natural law.'

I have argued elsewhere that telepathy, as a form of intimate touch or affective transfer, took form as a rather different kind of phenomenon with the rise of the psychological sciences, and particularly early social psychology towards the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century across Europe (Blackman, 2007b, 2008a). I am suggesting that telepathy is not a continuous object, but rather that intimate touch or affective transfer is enacted as a particular kind of object or *version* (Despret, 2004a) through the coordination of different 'entangled material agencies' (Barad, 2007: 56). Thus, following the insightful work of the physicist Karen Barad, I use the term *phenomenon* to signal that telepathy is not a pre-existing entity, discoverable through the adoption of appropriate

measurement devices, but emerges through the *intra-action*[6] of a variety of entangled agencies. This relational ontology has close links to the concept of enactment that we find in the work of the Dutch anthropologist Ann-Marie Mol (2002, 2008). She uses the term 'enactment' to refer to the processes through which practices engender or bring into being particular kinds of objects or entities. The focus on enactment shifts attention away from the idea of singular pre-existing entities or objects to the ways in which practices alter, transform, intervene and shape objects through diverse and various practices. As she argues: 'What we think of as a single object may appear to be more than one' (2002: vii).

This article will adopt such a 'praxiographic inquiry' (2002: 32) in order to reflect on the problem of affective transfer that coalesces around telepathy, hypnotic suggestibility and voice-hearing as these processes are enacted in various sites and entangled agencies. This performative or praxiographic approach does not reduce the body to an informational paradigm, but has close affinities with this paradigm in that the body is not considered a singular, bounded entity or substance but rather a 'body multiple' (Mol, 2002). The body is not bounded by the skin, where we understand the skin to be a kind of container for the self, but rather our bodies always extend and connect to other bodies – human and non-human – to practices, techniques, technologies and objects which produce different kinds of bodies and, arguably, different ways of enacting what it means to be human and non-human. The idea of the body as simply something that we both *have* and *are* is displaced in this perspective, to a focus on what bodies can *do*, what bodies could *become*, what practices enable and coordinate the *doing* of particular kinds of bodies, and what this makes possible in terms of our approach to questions about life, humanness, culture, power, technology and subjectivity (see Blackman, 2008b). However, it is worth spending some time drawing out the differences between the focus upon practices within praxiographic approaches, and my focus, which foregrounds the way in which the 'psyche', or 'psychological' processes, are distributed and enacted across and between different embodied practices.

Ontological Matters

It has been acknowledged by many contemporary scholars working with processual accounts of corporeality, that the psychological sciences are important knowledge-practices for discussions of ontology (Chertok and Stengers, 1992; Despret, 2004b; Latour, 2004; Massumi, 2002; Smith, 2007). Ian Hacking argues in *Historical Ontology* (2002) that reflections on ontology should always focus attention on the historical forms and practices through which entities come into

being as recognizable forms. Karen Barad (2007: 26) makes a similar argument and takes up a revised realist stance towards entities through positing a form of 'agential realism'. These historical approaches to questions of ontology argue that practices are performative in that they bring forth worlds. However, the ontological question of what might exist prior to enactment is suspended, in view of an approach which suggests that: 'Realness does not necessarily imply "thingness": what's real may not be an essence, an entity, or an individual existing object with inherent attributes' (2007: 56).

Here, then, we might talk about potentialities, affordances (Gibson, 1979) or capacities,[7] human and non-human, that through their intra-actions produce differently recognizable phenomena. Similarly, Despret (2008: 128) uses the term 'competences' to describe what experimental apparatuses afford or bring forth in their particular modes of efficacity. As Barad suggests, not only does matter matter, but it matters differently and in that sense is always dynamic. Barad (2007: 137) situates her own engagements with quantum physics beyond discourse and naturalist explanations of matter, arguing that: 'Matter is produced and productive, generated and generative.' These relational arguments move beyond anthropocentricism, by aligning embodiment not simply with human practices and meaning-making, but to the production of phenomena always produced through 'agential intra-action' – specific entanglements of human and non-human processes (2007: 139). Objects are brought forth and become what might be recognized as determinate and separate through an 'agential cut'. These cuts (which Barad also describes as exclusions) are an inherent feature of apparatuses that enact processes, potentialities and affordances, in complex entanglements, which reconfigure borders and boundaries.

Barad situates herself at odds with an informational paradigm that arguably reduces corporeality to code. She is also cautious about the reification of movement as a continuous flow, or movement of affective force, that often accompanies such work. She argues that:

> Information technologies are often touted as the neutrivo of the geopolitical-economic-social-cultural landscape, passing through matter as if it were transparent, innocently traversing all borders, whether those of nation-states or different computer platforms, with undiscriminating ease or disregard for obstacles – the great democratizer, the realization of a mobility and reach that know no bounds. (2007: 245)

Although matter has a dynamism, once we consider the productive effects of power, we see the way that 'agential cuts' or separations produce emergent phenomena, that can then become objects of meaning-making, can be mobilized in particular normalizing practices to judge and regulate difference, and bring forth particular ethical responses and responsibilities (see Hacking, 2002). They

can become 'black-boxed' (Latour, 1987), although never without dissent, controversy, anomalies, gaps and contradictions. In other words, potentials are always haunted by the excesses and exclusions that are part of mattering processes and inform their production as particular *versions* (Despret, 2004a, 2004b). This raises the question of embodiment, rather than the disembodiment of information theory, and is crucial in understanding enactment, and the role bodies play in providing the 'general potential for mediation' (Wegenstein, 2006: ix). This is important, as what we find when we consider hypnotic phenomena within contemporary cultural theory, is an authorization of neuro-physiology and a mobilizing of particular understandings of the central nervous system (CNS) to understand affective transfer. The problem with many of these accounts is that not enough attention is paid to the specific and situated genealogies of various neuroscientific and neurophysiological concepts (see Papoulias and Callard, this issue). This is particularly so when we consider the phenomenon of hypnotic suggestibility and its implications for understanding affective transfer.

The argument that will be explored throughout this article, therefore, is that work on affect does not mean that the problem of the psyche is over. Rather, we need to reflect on our modelling of psychic processes and particularly the place of the non-conscious, or what Patricia Clough (2009: 16) terms 'non-knowing' in our theorizing. As we will see, some of the arguments that have become central to studies of affect draw from theories that were intimately tied to suggestive technologies; those such as telepathy, hypnotic suggestion, mediumship and studies of hallucinations and delusions, which were concerned with breaches to the boundaries of the singularly bounded and distinctly human subject. The challenges of these telepathic modes of affective transfer have not thus far been adequately explored in our theorizing of affect.

My focus on modelization draws from the work of Félix Guattari (1995), who invites us to consider the models of the unconscious that are in circulation within different conceptions of subjectivity. Guattari (1995: 11) suggests that all models of the unconscious should be approached as inventions or productions; as 'assemblages of subjectivation' that operate as 'partial instruments' which allow the 'putting into place [of] new assemblages of listening and modelization' (1995: 63). This does not reduce or render obsolete the problematic of subjectivity, but rather should re-focus our attention on the different models of psychic processes in circulation to the exclusion of possible others. The question of how the 'psyche' or psychic processes are being modelled within work on affect can be illustrated by an example from the work of Bruno Latour (2004), whose definitions of the relationships between affect and corporeality take us back to technologies of affective transfer, such as telepathy, that have been touched upon throughout the article so far.

Affect and Suggestibility

Latour (2004), writing in a special issue of *Body & Society*, defines corporeality as the capacity of bodies (human and non-human) to affect and be open to being affected. This conception of affect as a force (rather than a substance), that traverses, connects and transforms bodies in their becoming, is one that Latour (2002) suggests has a lineage going back to the work of the 19th-century French sociologist and psychologist, Gabriel Tarde. Tarde was interested in the problem of the 'one and the many' (see Blackman, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a). This problem was aligned with the problem of (affective) communication and how to account for the spread of ideas, practices, beliefs, traditions and affects throughout populations, and why certain of these would become crystallized such that they would take on the status of custom, habit or fashion. Tarde, like William James and Henry Bergson, was interested in forms of affective transfer enacted in studies of mediumistic phenomena, and particularly telepathic transfer, hypnotic trance and hallucinations and delusions. Tarde's (1969) concepts of *invention* and *imitation* were made intelligible through particular understandings of suggestibility derived from these interests. Tarde developed an ontology which posited suggestion as being the defining characteristic of humanness, rather than rationality considered as a property of bounded, self-enclosed individuals (see Blackman, 2007b, for a development of Tarde's work in relation to early European and American social psychology).

In this sense, the invention of telepathy as a form of intimate touch or affective transfer was aligned to mesmerism, hypnotism, trance and studies of psychic phenomena such as telesthesia, telekinesis, rapping and automatic writing. All of these processes were seen to be vehicles for exploring what were taken to be apparent breaches of bodily and mental functions (Durham Peters, 1999; Smith, 1992). Affect as a (life) force that was communicated through subtle, sensuous and immaterial processes that were more akin to love, undermined understandings of leadership that were enacted through appeals to reason and rationality (see Blackman, 2007b, for a development of this discussion). Tarde's work took psychical research into the mainstream of the discipline, and particularly into social psychology. Tarde took seriously the interplay of the psychological with the sociological, and, as we can see, his model of suggestive processes focused upon immaterial or incorporeal processes; those that are difficult to see, but which register and manifest through their circulatory effects. Suggestive processes were both corporeal and incorporeal, and, importantly, decoupled from an individual psyche. His concerns, and the questions, problems and dilemmas that preoccupied him, were repeated across the discipline of psychology by psychologists such as Frederic Myers and William James, both of whom also took psychical research

into the mainstream of the discipline. It is worth spending some time exploring how telepathic modes of affective transfer were taken up by both writers within what came to be known as subliminal psychology, and later transformed and largely discounted within the psychological sciences.

The Problem of Personality

Frederic Myers' work on the survival of the 'personality' beyond death culminated in the publication of his book *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death* in 1934, following numerous journal articles. Myers' formulations influenced the work of Boris Sidis (1898) and William James (1890). It was also paradoxically one of the factors which led to the rejection of telepathic modes of affective transfer within the psychological sciences and the enactment of affective transfer as a rather different kind of phenomenon. Myers was interested in the question of whether there was anything that was located within an individual's personality 'which can survive bodily death' (1934: 1). The concept of personality enacted within Myers' work was oriented to the problem of the 'one and the many': this might be translated within contemporary cultural theory as a concern with how we live singularity in the face of multiplicity (see Blackman, 2008a). Myers' concept of personality had parallels with James's framing of the 'problem of personality' as a central problem for psychology and philosophy. James framed this problem as a problem of how the subject could achieve unity or 'hang together' when the self was divided from or discordant with itself due to a register of non-conscious experience. James attested to the affectivity of this register through his fascination with anomalous experiences, such as experiences of conversion, depression, psychotic hallucinations and delusions, multiple personality, drug-induced states of altered consciousness, hypnosis, automatic writing and mediumship. His interest in these experiences is made most explicit in *Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (1902), but also forms the backdrop to his seminal work in psychology published in the two volumes of *The Principles of Psychology* (1890).

Personality was seen to be organized through a relational ontology, which was based on connection of selves and non-selves rather than separation and unity of selfhood. The unity of self was an achievement that was continually usurped or undermined by the possibility of communications emanating from subliminal and supraliminal consciousness. Psychic unity was always 'federative and unstable' (1890: 16) and there was a constant travel and transfer of communication between attendant and parallel forms of consciousness which were not under the control of will. The concept of will was to become an important nodal point

within such discussions, referring, within a dualist epistemology, to both the mind's control over the body and, later, the brain's control over the nervous system (see Smith, 1992). However, as we will see, telepathy was seen to undermine such ordered regulations of self and other. The subliminal self provided a vehicle for transmission of communications that were registered through an infra-language that was primarily neuro-physiological. This infra-language recorded the effects of a suggestive realm on personality through the action of the CNS: the senses, vaso-motor system and the imagination.

The imagination was another imputed agency of transmission that could also be developed, trained and focused in order to induce healing and change. This is perhaps mobilized most visibly in Hack Tuke's (1892) *Dictionary of Psychological Medicine*. Hack was the grandson of Samuel Tuke, the founder of the York Retreat, which was the first charitable county asylum in the UK in 1777 to use 'moral therapy' to address the problem of insanity. Tuke revisited the practices of 'the Retreat' and saw the basis of a 'New Science' in his explanation of the 'principle of the imagination', which he used to explain mesmerism, the effects of emotion in producing disease, the effect of the intellect on the health of the body, to induce anaesthesia and so forth. This was not simply the championing of the 'moral' over the physical, nor the reflection of the imparting of religious beliefs in the practice of medicine, but a way of constituting ontological concerns that were radically different from the kinds of understanding being incorporated into psychiatry at the time of his writing (see Blackman, 2001, for further development of Tuke's writings). It is interesting that in Tuke's work the concept of imagination was accorded a diffuse and relational quality, which distributed subjectivity amongst a range of agencies and actors, material and immaterial.

Although Tuke was primarily anthropocentric in his concerns, what was shared between Tuke and Myers was the imputing of imagination as an agency of transmission that troubled notions of separation and boundary between self and not-self, mind and body, and the material and ephemeral. Myers had staged his notion of imagination as an expression of 'man's own self-suggestive power' (1934: 202) through the use of a measuring device known as the spectroscope. This device refracted light waves emitted from matter through a prism, materializing what was taken to be immaterial through a specific experimental apparatus. Barad (2007: 73) suggests that diffractions do not simply reveal what is already there, but rather, 'bring the reality of entanglements to light'. Thus the apparatus, which included Myers and his particular theoretical concepts (i.e. the subliminal and supraliminal self), allowed the interference of light waves producing light as a spectrum rather than as having determinate properties. This provided an analogy for Myers' notion of a spectrum of consciousness, which allowed him to align

a range of anomalous experiences, such as trance, sleep, lethargy, auditory and visual hallucinations, crystal vision, pre-cognition and psychical invasion to the action of *suggestion*. This action or transfer was registered through the CNS (subliminal self) and through experiences (supraliminal) which were constituted as vibrational communications with 'a meta-etherial world' (Myers, 1934: 223). Thus imagination was an agency of communication that opened links with a spirit world, and thus for Myers opened up the possibility of communication with the dead. Telepathy, hypnotism, spirit-healing, dreams and prayer, for example, were all considered manifestations of this supraliminal realm. The subliminal and supraliminal self were not considered separate entities, but rather as existing in continuous movement or transport, thus undermining the notion of a bounded, unified self. The analogy that was made, largely derived from 19th-century energy physics, was that consciousness was not a property of brain (considered topographically and spatially), but was 'all around' in the 'ether', much like the invisible, flowing forces of electricity, the wireless, radiation and so forth (see Asendorf, 1993; Benthall, 1976).

Myers' work was very important for William James, who argued that Myers' formulations of the subliminal and supraliminal selves were: 'the first attempt in any language to consider the phenomena of hallucination, hypnoticism, automatism, double personality, and mediumship as connected parts of the whole subject' (in Murphy and Ballou, 1960: 39). William James was a member of the American Society for Psychical Research, which was established in 1885 under the presidency of Simon Newcomb. Newcomb was a renowned astronomer and was president of the British Society for Psychical Research from 1884 to 1885. James, like his eminent contemporaries, was interested in the possibility of life after death, and had many sittings with a famous Boston medium, Mrs Piper. James was very entranced by Mrs Piper's seeming accuracy of knowledge and events, and, although concerned with detecting fraud or deception, was convinced that she was either telepathic or acted as a conduit between this world and the apparent after-life. As he proclaimed, there were 'several instances of knowledge that was veridical and seemed unquestionably supernormal' (in Murphy and Ballou, 1960: 197).

Luckhurst (2002) suggests that the interest in the after-life and the possible transport of communication between the material and the ephemeral was one of the main conditions that would shift such interest to the margins. As he argues:

> Ironically, as orthodox psychiatric opinion was beginning to accept hypnosis in England, Mrs Piper was the occasion for many of the most respected psychical researchers to concede that telepathy was insufficient to explain her powers; she had to be in contact with the dead. What had led psychical research into orthodoxy was what would edge it to the margin. (2002: 106)

Luckhurst concludes his genealogy of telepathy by claiming that subliminal psychology was pushed to the periphery, taking up residence within the psychological sciences as a marginalized sub-discipline, parapsychology,[8] rationalized under a newly emerging concept of ESP (extra-sensory perception). The shift of telepathy to the margins is hugely important for understanding what is being missed in contemporary understandings of affective transfer. One of the important aspects of work on affect across the humanities and social sciences has been the turn to the neuro and psychological sciences for models of the non-conscious; this includes attempts to model sensation, memory and perception, perhaps captured most tellingly by Massumi's (2002) concept of the 'biogram'. Work on affect often eschews the concept of the unconscious for a notion of the non-conscious that is tied to a bodily unconscious understood through the concept of *habit*. These are forms of bodily memory which lie outside of a subject's conscious reflections and deliberations, and are often enfleshed within the processes of the CNS or proprioception (see Massumi, 2002). An example of this is Massumi's notion of the biogram, used to refer to the bodily memory of movement that allows us to orient in the world. This bodily memory is kinaesthetic rather than visual or cognitive, and is aligned to proprioception. It is not that we do not have visual maps or ways of orienting, but that the visual and non-visual coexist and co-function. Massumi focuses his attention towards what we might call prodigious data: evidence from synaesthetes, i.e. those who 'are "normal" people who are abnormally aware of their habits of perception' (2002: 188). This might be a person who remembers birthdays through colour, for example. These biograms or non-conscious habits of perception usually recede to the background and operate as a non-conscious underpinning to our orientations in the world.

Massumi's engagement with neuroscientific data from synaesthetes focuses upon unusual or exceptional experiences. However, memory within this modelling is reduced to synaesthesia – a term which refers to the ways in which the senses co-inform and influence each other. Memory is aligned to a bodily memory mapped through proprioception, and is housed within the confines of a singularly bounded human body. This is despite the fact that affect is taken to refer to that which is pre- or trans-individual, and which circulates and exists between bodies. This is not to say that affect does not register through non-conscious memory, nor that it cannot be explored and experienced through proprioception or muscular memory. However, this reduces memory to a bodily form of *habit* which relies on a singular body and fails to consider how a non-conscious or unconscious can be shared, is plural and can exist and circulate between subjects, as we have seen with telepathic modes of affective transfer. There are other models

of memory that do not reduce the psychic to sense channels and processes, and which, importantly, also deal with traumatic memory. This might include work on implicit memory at the intersection of object-relations psychoanalysis and neuroscience (Mancia, 2007), both of which include more intercorporeal and intersubjective notions of memory and so allow an engagement with trauma that Massumi's notion of the biogram cannot do justice to (see Cho, 2008; Clough, 2009). The staging of this debate takes us back to the 'problem of personality' identified by William James, and to the question of how subjects can be both 'one yet many', and how this manifests and materializes in our modelling of psychic and psychological processes.

The problem with the biogram, then, is that it sets affective processes within the flesh, and can be seen as part of a drive within the neuro, biological and psychological sciences to discount telepathic modes of affective transfer, mirrored in the way that suggestion – understood by Tarde as a relational, intercorporeal and trans-subjective phenomenon – became re-made and re-invented within the psychological sciences as 'abnormal suggestion'. This was considered a physiological automatism associated with inferiority, primitivism and pathology, found in those, such as the working classes and children, who were considered more suggestible to others, both human and non-human (see Blackman, 2007a, 2007b; Blackman and Walkerdine, 2001). What became important within the psychological sciences was the ability of subjects to shore themselves up in relation to 'social influence' processes, shifting attention to the problem of will and attention (Blackman, 2008a; Crary, 1990; Smith, 1992). This shift is important in order to situate the kinds of ontologies of bodies currently being advanced within the paradigms of life and affect that we will encounter in the next section of the article. In order to consider why subliminal psychology, with its more distributed notion of the psyche, has been placed in the margins in work on affect, it is important to understand the place of the Macy Conferences in engendering particular models of the nervous system for understanding the problem of affective transfer. As we will see in the next section, the desire to enflesh communication failed to successfully model hypnotic suggestion (as one example of affective transfer), perhaps accounting for its unacknowledged persistence in contemporary problematics of subjectivity.

Psychogalvanic Wobbles: The Macy Conferences

Massumi (2002) suggests that one of the problems for humanities scholars in thinking affect and bodies is the lack of a conceptual vocabulary. The kinds of ontology forming the backdrop to redefinitions of bodies and life across the

humanities have engaged with concepts from cybernetics and information theory for the vestiges of a conceptual vocabulary (see Hayles, 1999). Rather than repeat the basis of information theory as it has been taken up in cultural theory, I want to re-visit the Macy Conferences and explore how hypnotic suggestibility entered the frame as an illustration of the problem of affective transfer. Although a hypnotic paradigm had become marginalized within the psychological sciences in the early 1900s, during the 1940s and 1950s the restructuring and reorganization of American psychiatry in the form of social psychiatry led to the reinvention and re-making of hypnosis. Psychiatry was interested in different reactions, constituted as adaptation (to stress), which were located within an individual's personality. Personality, within this discursive complex, was constituted as the locus of singular characteristics or traits, that were considered in-born (genetic) and learnt (environmental). Reactions were delineated according to measures of severity which were differentiated through the concepts of neurosis and psychosis (see Blackman, 2001, for a development of this discussion).

Within cybernetic discussions that took place at the Macy Conferences, the American psychiatrist Lawrence Kubie framed the problem of differential reactions to stress as one that would illuminate the relationship between information and action. Kubie mobilized a distinction that was to become central to how intelligence and learning were constituted within cybernetics and information theory: that is, the distinction between flexible adaptation and rigidity or inflexibility. The normative reaction to stress, one that was seen to be governed by reason, argument and exhortation, was flexible and therefore adaptive. It was also primarily seen to be conscious and cognitive. Neurotic mal-adaptations were considered 'endlessly repetitive', enslaved and fixed, and primarily tied to the production of a non-conscious realm of habit and automaticity (Heransgegeben, 2003: 70). Therefore, the neurotic potential was such that the person is unable to learn or adapt flexibly to changing circumstances. This was considered a realm of psychopathology that set the neurotic apart from those able to flexibly self-reorganize. This constituted psychopathology as a 'disease of memory', a 'communication failure' that would result in a loss of stability (Halpern, 2005: 307). Within this formulation memory was aligned to habit, where habit was considered the expression of non-conscious emotional and affective automatisms. This was a model of memory that encrypted and registered habit at the level of the CNS, and that effectively closed down the mimesis or alterity brought to the foreground in technologies of attention and listening such as hypnosis and telepathy.

There was much dissent in relation to this view, but also much support for the notion that learning might be conditioned by affect or emotion, which was

understood through neuro-physiological concepts. The non-conscious therefore became the 'black box' (Halpern, 2005) of cybernetic research, perpetually exceeding understanding and remaining a central issue throughout the development of information theory. The CNS became the model for understanding this 'black box', and for modelling and developing other biological and social systems within cybernetic research. The CNS was produced as the site of habit and automaticity, and to that extent immateriality was materialized through an infra-language of the non-conscious that was seen to move to its own rhythm or beat. These processes were seen to present an 'operational problem' (Heransgegeben, 2003: 73) for cybernetic research. Hypnotic suggestion was seen to be a vehicle for both producing neurotic potentials (what were taken to be transient neurotic reactions) and for removing neurotic compulsions very quickly. It was imputed as a possible agency of transmission for information that would spread very quickly throughout the nervous system, and which moved in realms that by-passed conscious cognition. Kubie suggested that if one could understand how hypnosis worked, one could form a model of information exchange that could account for the complexity of communication processes. However, the staging of hypnotic suggestibility, under different experimental conditions, merely produced 'fragmentary and puzzling empirical data' (Heransgegeben, 2003: 42) that exceeded neuro-physiological understandings mobilized at that time. This did not thwart attempts to produce devices that would enact hypnotic suggestion as a psycho-physiological trace, such as the use of measures of galvanic skin resistance, for example. This aligned suggestion to determinate responses of the autonomic nervous system, although it perpetually escaped such formulations through seemingly inhering *between* rather than *within* individuals.

This paradox is one that arguably lies at the heart of cybernetics research and information theory. The kinds of systems theory being developed within this interdisciplinary context were concerned with processes rather than entities. This could be translated as a concern with the 'many' rather than the 'one'. Information was not a thing but rather a force that was defined in terms of what it *does*. This force was considered measurable and, as many have argued, cybernetics was a branch of communications theory concerned with prediction and control. This was linked to the efficient design of electronic communication technologies such as the telephone, radio, radar and television, for example. Information was 'the order wrenched from disorder' (Heransgegeben, 2003: 534), and noise was considered the random activity that needed to be controlled for. Codes were patterns or structures of information that emerged from processes that would enable a system's flexible self-organization. Although this mathematical precision guided cybernetic research, when it came to the psychic it was never clear,

settled or certain how 'to find the psychologic correlation of physiologic patterns' (Heransgegeben, 2003: 592). The analogous use of the nervous system as a model for communication patterns between animals, humans, machines, insects, electronic technologies and the animate and the inanimate, for example, did not produce the unanimous consensus that was hoped for. As Halpern (2005: 305) suggests, despite the production of memory as the site of psychic automatisms, it continued to be a 'nagging residue for Wiener and other cyberticians', and, as we have seen, this was clearly operationalized in the problems that hypnotic suggestibility presented to information theory.

The problems with locating the non-conscious as the 'black box' of cybernetics research produced disagreement, particularly on the part of Gregory Bateson, who did not agree with the conventional views espoused by Kubie that psychosis is a disease of the central nervous system (Heims, 1991). Bateson's (2000) more relational approach to the problem of affective communication is one that is elided by the selective engagement with psychological concepts within contemporary affect studies. It is this approach of Bateson's which provides a more ecological and relational set of concepts for thinking affect and bodies, and which takes us on a different trajectory to work which has become more authorized within Deleuzian-inspired approaches to affect (see Blackman, forthcoming b). This article therefore points towards the problems and limits of conceiving of suggestion solely as a physiological automatism, and also points towards the importance of re-invigorating understandings of the psychosocial dimensions of subjectivities which are evacuated by contemporary cultural theory's 'setting in the flesh'.

I argue that both the problem of memory and hypnotic suggestibility remain as 'nagging residues' within contemporary work on affect and bodies, and that both memory and hypnotic suggestion offer an invitation to contemporary scholars to examine the models of the non-conscious that are being invoked, implicitly and sometimes explicitly in their own discussions of affect and corporeality. I will examine this particularly in the work of Brian Massumi, whose work has become seminal to the current affective terms being authorized across the humanities and social sciences. I want to consider how a re-engagement with models of affective transfer refocuses our attention on the question of the psychological attunement of bodies, that does not reduce to the central nervous system. This foregrounds the important question of how we might think corporeality as having the potential for psychological attunement. This does not dismiss the psyche from our theorizings, but does call for more complex models that can address the problems with trying to set memory, sensation, perception, attention, etc. within the flesh. This closes down the intercorporeality and relationality that different models invent and disclose (see Blackman, forthcoming b).

The Volatile Ontology of Bodies

One approach that has had a significant and seminal impact on understandings of affect and corporeality across the humanities is the work of Brian Massumi (2002) on the 'autonomy of affect'. What is interesting about Massumi's account is his indebtedness to a hypnotic paradigm, even if this is only acknowledged in passing in a very small footnote. Why is this work important and how might it be extended if we take the implicit hypnotic paradigm that underpins the ontological framings of such an account more seriously? Massumi reconfigures the usual language of the higher and the lower within experimental psychology, in order to enact the CNS as a site of a non-conscious corporeality that registers the flow and intensity of affect, prior to any engagement or recognition of the action of cognition. This is authorized through engaging with particular stagings or enactments of image reception within experimental psychology, which suggest that there are certain responses (to television for example) that occur 'automatically', have an immediacy of felt intensity, guide action and yet are not easily available for conscious deliberation or articulation. They are wordless and thus, for Massumi, suggest the primacy of affect in our communications. This has been characterized in the literature as evidence of a 'half-second delay'[9] (Thrift, 2004, 2007), or what might be termed an 'excess' to communication which is described as autonomous; as virtual, rather than actual. These terms are mobilized from a Bergsonian philosophy, and assembled as part of a politics of hope, which re-invents and inverts such distinctions between higher and lower, celebrating the *lower* as a potential site of change, transformation and mutability. Where, in experimental psychology, these kinds of accounts are aligned to a mass of 'experimental effects' that align the automaticity of the CNS to enslavement – to those experiences which are considered more inferior, instinctual and impulsive, Massumi re-formulates them through the work of the 19th-century philosopher, Henri Bergson.

This is part of a theoretical practice that takes what Massumi likens to 'found concepts', and redistributes them by connecting them to other concepts, creating what he calls a form of 'creative contagion' (2002: 19). Thus Massumi connects back to work primarily undertaken within a 'hypnotic paradigm', where, as we have seen, strict borders and boundaries between mind and body, self and not-self and the material and ephemeral were taking form in ways which disturbed a language of the higher and the lower. Massumi defines corporeality through a particular notion of *movement* as continuous transformation, such that bodies never stay still and always extend beyond themselves. This is analogous to modernist discussions of electricity, which equated movement to an autonomous flow of forces without end (see Asendorf, 1993). Rather than the CNS becoming

the site of fixity, it is also seen to offer the possibility of flight toward the unknown and unknowable (see Manning, 2007). This is despite the fact that, through the histories of the psychological sciences, the instinctual and automatic have been considered as a problem of the over-suggestible masses; of pathology, abnormality and a dangerous permeability (see Blackman, 2007b, 2008a; Blackman and Walkerdine, 2001). This form of creative contagion is very seductive, invoking matter as dynamic and identifying the unexpected as a possible joyful consequence of the flow of affect across bodies. What I want to do is offer a possible excess to this model, which may offer more of an engagement with the kinds of ontology being presumed in this account and the psychic and psychological complexity they explicitly and implicitly invoke. This is particularly the case when we consider delineations being made between the flexible and the rigid, which enter unchallenged within Massumi's account, despite the commitment to eschewing 'received psychological categories' into this new paradigm (2002: 27).

I have already used the terms 'potentialities', 'affordances' or 'capacities' to refer to those psychic or psychological processes that, through their entanglement within specific practices, can become modulated, amplified and produced as particular kinds of entities or objects. This is not to suggest that the psychic or psychological exists in an essentialist sense, but rather that there may be potentials which become part of processes of mattering. Mark Hanson (2006: ix) makes a similar argument in relation to the co-evolution of the human with technics, extending the concept of embodiment 'as it increasingly becomes dispersed and distributed beyond the skin' in his notion of 'bodies-in-code'. Drawing upon work on the 'skin-ego' (see Walkerdine, this issue), Merleau-Ponty's concept of a body-schema (1968) and Simondon's (1992) account of affectivity, bodies-in-code refers to the importance of corporeality in offering up the potential for mediation. However, Hanson's approach to embodiment importantly recognizes the importance of engaging a lived interiority that registers psychically and affectively. This raises the important issue that the turn to affect across the humanities should not dismiss the importance of re-engaging the vexed problematic of subjectivity (see Blackman et al., 2008).

As we saw with earlier work within a hypnotic paradigm, what was important was both establishing the permeability of boundaries – psychic and material – but also attending to how subjects lived this multiplicity and attempted to 'hang together'. This is what James (1890) termed the 'problem of personality', which has a continuity with contemporary work across the humanities that is attempting to reinvigorate the problematic of subjectivity in light of work on affect, bodies and life. I am not arguing that suggestion is a timeless object, a property of mind that needs to be rediscovered or disclosed. This would simply reverse

the traditional historiographies of a suggestive realm, which posit the discovery of the usually Freudian unconscious and the replacement of hypnotic trance with transference as the pinnacle of progress (see Chertok and Stengers, 1992). Ellenberger (1970) conducts such a linear historiography constituting suggestion as an old, abandoned idea which has been productively reworked and superseded within dynamic psychology.[10] We also need to be cautious in invoking the psychic or psychological as a property of mind. Indeed, work across critical psychology and feminist science studies has done much to redistribute the psychological throughout bodies, such that the gut can be considered psychologically attuned (see Wilson, 2004), and bodies are always considered open and permeable, thus taking the psychological out of a closed, singular and even distinctly human body (see Blackman et al., 2008). Crucial to this redistribution is a primary engagement with those experiences that have been relegated to a realm of psychopathology. This is important so that we do not reproduce a distinction between the flexible and the rigid that has become so central to the delineation of what counts as psychopathology in the psychological and psychiatric sciences (see Blackman, 2005). It is this distinction which has found its way into cultural theory, through the back door, in contemporary discussions of the politics and ethics of affective bodies. It forms the backdrop to discussions of affect as a flow of continuous, autonomous movement across bodies, such that bodies are considered always in transport.

The Movement of Affect and the Primacy of Process

Although Massumi (2002) acknowledges the interdependent relationship between stasis and movement, continuous movement is reified as the site of creative potentiality and evolution. This is where affect escapes confinement (by bodies) and opens bodies to a continuous process of becoming. This movement of affect and the intensity it creates is related to a subject's sense of vitality and aliveness. Although Massumi does not want to locate discussions of vitality within the confines of individual subjectivity, there is a sense that the becoming-perceptible of such aliveness is one ontological characteristic of life and its potential enhancement. Massumi (2002) cites an example given by Oliver Sacks, a famous American psychiatrist, of a ward of patients suffering from a language disorder, global aphasia, and their responses to a speech by the then US president, Ronald Reagan. Global aphasia renders the subject unable to understand words, but this is compensated for by 'developing extraordinary abilities to read extraverbal cues; inflection, facial expression, and other gestures – body language' (in Massumi, 2002: 39). Their response was one of outrage at the speech, and this is constituted

as an example of how affect flows and moves through extra-verbal channels. Massumi invokes a kind of visceral sensibility that, if harnessed, would allow the 'sensing of the intensity' (2002: 74). However, this is not constituted as a self-conscious practice of perception, but rather allowing oneself to become a transducer, a 'conversion channel' (2002: 75) or conductor of such forces.

Brennan (2004) also likens bodies to transducers or conversion channels, but is more explicit about the techniques that subjects might adopt in order to enhance such a 'sensitive feel' or touch. Brennan locates the phenomenon of entrainment within psycho-neuro-endocrinology, arguing that the alignment of nervous systems through smell manifests a form of chemical entrainment that is a possible agent for the transmission of affect.[11] I have written elsewhere about how Brennan dismisses suggestion and a hypnotic paradigm as mere rhetoric (Blackman, 2008a), although a considerable amount of work that she draws on is indebted to such a paradigm. Although she produces affect as thoughtless or wordless, she does argue that the development of practices of discernment, where one can develop knowledge of affective transmission, is crucial to challenging the myth of affective self-containment. These practices might be reflective or meditative, and for Brennan involve a move from non-conscious feeling to conscious reflection and deliberation. These practices might involve 'compassion, recollection and memory, and detachment' (Brennan, 2004: 126). She suggests looking towards Chinese and other non-Western holistic health systems for the development of such techniques. As she argues: 'Of that we cannot speak, thereof we must learn' (2004: 164). The cautionary tale I would like to offer in relation to this shift to non-conscious processes and their affective engagement and management is that we need to be attentive to the ways in which bodies are understood as psychologically attuned and the models that are used to understand this. The aforementioned authors, although at pains to de-materialize and de-essentialize such processes, are in danger of formulating practices of discernment as properties of psychological subjects. That is, subjects who can develop capacities of deliberation (and flexibly self-organize), and those who remain fixed and unable to move.[12]

Although the capacity to develop such discernment is aligned to particular kinds of practices (those, incidentally, associated with non-Western traditions of medicine and healing), there is a danger of positing flexible reorganization as the means whereby subjects become aware of their capacity to affect and be affected. Massumi suggests that this 'energetic potential' (2002: 92) relates to a subject's *susceptibility* to being affected. This could easily reduce to a mapping of what are taken to be internal psychological capacities or mechanisms that might allow such awareness. Indeed, this distinction is central to contemporary experimental psychological work on the problem of hypnotic suggestibility (Heap et al., 2004).

Latour (2004) is less clear on the possible mechanisms of becoming-perceptible, but does make a distinction between the vital – those who can open themselves to being affected – and those who are considered dumb – unable or unwilling to adopt such a discriminating capacity. In other words, those bodies considered flexible and open, and those considered rigid and closed. The focus on operationalizing a distinction between the flexible and the rigid takes us back to cybernetics and to definitions of living systems where flexible reorganization was taken to be a defining characteristic of intelligent life (human and non-human). This definition produced intelligent life as a form of 'incomplete determinism' (Wiener, 1965: 10), where exact repetition in terms of learning was impossible. However, as we have seen, hypnotic suggestion and its possible psychological or psychic correlations could not be contained by this formulation, and remained as an excess. The problem is how might we consider affectivity without reifying the process as a continuous flow that re-instates a distinction between bodies considered flexible and those considered rigid? This problem is made manifest when we consider modes of affective transfer as they are enacted in technologies of listening and attention, such as telepathy, hypnotic suggestion and voice-hearing. The way psychic processes are distributed across these embodied practices raises further questions about our models of memory, attention, perception and sensation.

Concluding Comments

Contemporary approaches within the paradigms of life and affect have identified the problematic of *movement* in relation to bodies, human and non-human, as a central issue. This work starts from a relational ontology and focuses upon the entangled agencies, entities and practices which make, re-make and enact different bodily configurations. However, the term 'bodily' only has currency within this work if one considers the body as inherently machinic; that is, as defined by its relational connections with others, human and non-human. This rather de-animated or synthetic view of corporeality is re-animated through the positing of an intensive affective flow which moves through such connections affording a virtual potential of vitality, creativity and transformation. Thus a turn to affect is considered a turn away from the problematic of subjectivity and a turn towards those processes which animate life in all its mediated complexities. This argument is very seductive, but as I hope I have shown, silences modes of telepathic transfer that formed the backdrop to work on affective communication which remains as a ghostly presence. This suggestive ontology is one that identified the psychic and material potentialities that afforded connection and offered a very different

version of the psychic or the psychological than the one that became authorized within the psychological sciences. It is this authorized version which enters unchecked into many contemporary discussions of affect (Massumi, 2002). It is arguably symptomatic of the method of creative contagion and plundering of mainstream psychological concepts characteristic of much of this work (also see Papoulias and Callard, this issue).

In my current research, I am examining some rather different models of memory, habit, perception and sensation which are emerging within technologies of attention and listening, such as voice-hearing and suggestion, that lie at the margins of the mainstream psychological and neurosciences. I suggest that this work is important as it disrupts the model of the foundational autonomous subject authorized within the 'psy' sciences, and for this reason offers challenges to our thinking, as can be seen with work on suggestion and voice-hearing linked by the concept of the bicameral mind (Jaynes, 1976). This is an area which has largely been neglected by humanities scholars, despite the interest shown by many contemporary cultural scholars in the biological and neurosciences (see Harrington, 1987). The 'bicameral mind' shows evidence of the brain's capacity to share the affects of others, where the right brain is considered a neuropsychological pipeline that psychically connects bodies (across time and place, for example) in ways that are little understood or examined. This work is often marginalized within the mainstream neurosciences and is validated within marginal sub-disciplines of psychology such as parapsychology, or what is more commonly referred to as the 'psychology of anomalous experience'. This sub-discipline is interesting for body-studies because of the way it starts with experiences that always already breach the boundaries between the self and other, inside and outside, and the material and immaterial. The assumption is that these experiences are not simply irrational perceptions or signs of pathology (that something has gone wrong), but rather that they amplify and magnify processes that animate life. This work does not only attempt to localize brain function, but rather shows the capacity of the brain to extend beyond the confines of the individual body. This work is offering inventive and interesting models of subjectivity that take us beyond the non-conscious black-box of cybernetics and associated work in the contemporary psychological and neurosciences. Subliminal psychology and associated brain-body-world couplings, such as voice-hearing, energy medicine, hypnotic suggestion, the placebo effect and so on, are foregrounded in this work (see Gruzelier, 2002). I would suggest that this work can also help us to invent models of trauma and affect that do not reduce to kinaesthesia or the action of the central nervous system (see Blackman, forthcoming b).

As with work on new media and digital technologies (Crary, 1990; Hanson, 2006; Wegenstein, 2006), contemporary stagings of suggestion and voice-hearing re-focus our attention on embodiment and how to think this realm as distributed, dispersed, and as a set of mediated and mediating potentialities, without reducing it to a disembodied notion of information. The research that is currently in progress (Blackman, forthcoming b) will extend some of the work on affect, life and bodies that I have discussed in this article, and offer a model of subjectivities which does not dissolve affect into informational or affective autonomous flow. This will entail a more cautious engagement with the register of the 'psyche', which ties this problem back to the vexed problematic of subjectivity, or what William James referred to as the 'problem of personality' (see Blackman, 2008a). This focus shifts more to the new kinds of entities, relationships, problems, objects and questions that are made possible in different practices that enact suggestive potentials as specific kinds of affectivity.

The paradox that James drew attention to was how to explain how subjects live multiplicity in the face of singularity, or what we might term, following Simondon (1992), individuation (see Venn, this issue). If we take this question seriously what kind of ethics and politics of life and affect might be brought into focus by re-inventing what has largely been forgotten? What silences and gaps are brought sharply into focus when we consider the consequences of the forgetting of modes of telepathic affective transfer identified within some of the contemporary work on affect, life and bodies? This work is largely indebted to such paradigms with little acknowledgement or serious consideration of what affective transfer has been and indeed could become in specific material entanglements. This is the subject of future research, which does not posit discernment as a practice of discriminating subjects, but as an artefact produced through the intra-action of specific im/material agencies, human and non-human.[13]

Notes

1. I am using the term 'non-knowing' to signal forms of knowing that are felt, not easily articulated and which direct attention to the realm of the intercorporeal and trans-subjective in our 'sense-making'. However, this does imply that there are forms of knowing that can be easily differentiated from non-knowing, and which are always conscious and rational. This is itself a problematic distinction to make.

2. Brian Massumi, in an interview with Zournazi, describes affect as 'hope in the present', directing our attention to: 'Where we might be able to go and what we might be able to do, in every present situation' (Zournazi, 2002: 212). Therefore affect does not pertain to what bodies are, but rather what bodies could do.

3. As Angel suggests; 'the moment of conjuncture between contemporary critical theory and neurology is a fleeting one, its future yet to be determined' (2005: 336). Cromby argues that the 'recent

emergence of new potentials from neuroscience' and 'a growth of interest in social science in issues of the body, embodiment and affect' suggest that a 'more systematic collaboration might be possible' (2007: 149). Cromby argues that one obstacle to any such collaborative inquiry will be in relation to the problem of method.

4. Luckhurst (2002: 64) draws attention to a newspaper clipping about a séance that Galton had attended in Bedford Square, London, in 1881 that was included in his *Psychometrics Inquiry Notebooks*. This gathering of eminent men, which included, 'Dr Andrew Clark, the Queen's personal physician, the prominent Alienist Daniel Tuke, and the editor of the British Medical Journal, Ernest Hart', was the subject of this article, which drew attention to the 'sympathetic curiosity' that governed the encounter. Perhaps Galton's interest in mediumistic phenomena is less surprising when we learn that his development of psychometrics was tied to the problem of how to measure supposed properties of the individual, that were taken to be operations of the mind.

5. Luckhurst's (2002) genealogy of telepathy offers a fascinating account of the ways in which telepathy became an object of psychical and later psychological research. However, its formation within the psychological sciences was to take a different course where it was re-invented as a phenomenon aligned to the problem of will. Will or inhibition was to come to be considered the defining characteristic of selfhood within the psychological sciences (also see, Blackman, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a; Smith, 1992).

6. Barad (2007) develops the concept of intra-action, as opposed to interaction, to suggest that we should not talk of pre-existing entities interacting, but employ a more relational ontology that explores how entities emerge from intra-actions consisting of human and non-human agencies that produce, through their specific entanglements, what we take entities or phenomena to be. Thus we are always studying 'entangled phenomena' and not the interaction or interpenetration of separate entities.

7. Indeed, Hacking (2002: 15) uses the term '*in potentia*' to describe what I am calling affordances or capacities.

8. Parapsychology is now more commonly known within the psychological sciences as the psychology of anomalous experience and aligns a diverse range of phenomena and experiences, including mediumship, electronic voice phenomena, magical beliefs, lucid dreaming, death-bed visions, miracle cures, paranormal beliefs, false memory, telepathy, near-death states, haunted experiences, hypnosis, the placebo effect and so forth. It is framed as a study of extraordinary or exceptional phenomena, but is not restricted to those which might be delineated as paranormal. These phenomena are often framed and constituted through the neuro and cognitive psychology of perception and belief.

9. Massumi (2002: 29) suggests that the 'half-second delay' illustrates that matter is not dumb but offers up a realm of potential.

10. 'No branch of knowledge has undergone so many metamorphoses as dynamic psychiatry: from primitive healing to magnetism, magnetism to hypnotism, hypnotism to psychoanalysis and the newer dynamic schools' (Ellenberger, 1970: 1).

11. Brennan (2004: 49) argues that entrainment refers to the 'olfactory and rhythmic means whereby one person's affects can be linked to another's. These biochemical and neurological literatures have not, to my knowledge, been linked to the study of the transmission of affect.'

12. Claire Hemmings (2005) has cogently foregrounded the current interest in affect as one which promises to emancipate the subject from social constraint, and thus to sideline theories and (paranoid) theorists who might wish to explore affect as an enduring mechanism of social reproduction. Thus 'good affect' is that which is taken to 'undo' whereas 'bad affect' is that which sticks, fixes and prevents movement and change.

13. Also see my work on the phenomenon of voice-hearing, which suggests that the capacity to hear voices in particular ways is aligned to the subject's co-option or disposal within particular material assemblages, which enact voices as particular kinds of entities (see Blackman, 2001). In other words, the capacity to hear voices in particular ways is not down to the supposed internal psychological resources or mechanisms of the subject, but the capacity of practices to afford certain potentialities.

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