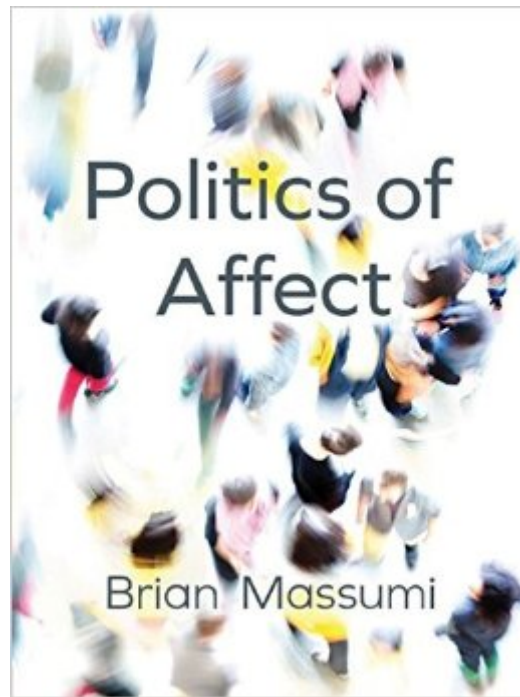


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Politics Of Affect



Synopsis

'The capacity to affect and to be affected'. This simple definition opens a world of questions - by indicating an openness to the world. To affect and to be affected is to be in encounter, and to be in encounter is to have already ventured forth. Adventure: far from being enclosed in the interiority of a subject, affect concerns an immediate participation in the events of the world. It is about intensities of experience. What is politics made of, if not adventures of encounter? What are encounters, if not adventures of relation? The moment we begin to speak of affect, we are already venturing into the political dimension of relational encounter. This is the dimension of experience in-the-making. This is the level at which politics is emergent. In these wide-ranging interviews, Brian Massumi explores this emergent politics of affect, weaving between philosophy, political theory and everyday life. The discussions wend their way 'transversally': passing between the tired oppositions which too often encumber thought, such as subject/object, body/mind and nature/culture. New concepts are gradually introduced to remap the complexity of relation and encounter for a politics of emergence: 'differential affective attunement', 'collective individuation', 'micropolitics', 'thinking-feeling', 'ontopower', 'immanent critique'. These concepts are not offered as definitive solutions. Rather, they are designed to move the inquiry still further, for an ongoing exploration of the political problems posed by affect. Politics of Affect offers an accessible entry-point into the work of one of the defining figures of the last quarter century, as well as opening up new avenues for philosophical reflection and political engagement.

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Customer Reviews

I have read Massumi's "Parables for the Virtual" (see my review), and so I was enlisted in the speed, vividness, direct address of the language of affects. So when I read this book, I was ready for what was to come. I felt right at home, and the book's more "casual" approach to these ideas made me feel that I was among colleagues. But I don't know who this book will benefit, in the absence of reading the more considered texts of "Parables..." It has a "marketing" feel to it; that the book seeks to make these ideas more familiar; and yet if I come to these texts first, I might wonder just what kind of book am I reading. Is it psychology? Am I supposed to do something different because of what this book offers? I really don't think these notions are ready for this kind of treatment yet. I think that they need more fermenting in the brew of Continental thinking (I am not sure how much of Deleuze's "univocity" and "virtuality," and "difference" is taken into account, for instance); I have always felt that the "pragmatic" orientation rushes too quickly to the "cash value" of an idea -- which I suspect might be in play here. Still, Massumi's work, and that of his colleague Erin Manning (also interviewed in the book, but not listed as an author!!!), will help us along to a new outlook on just what is "real" after all, and just what it is that we need to learn to relate to and appreciation in one another, and the earth, if we are to sustain this endeavor of human aspiring. I say, it will help us move from the "deep" work of Deleuze and Derrida, but only after we have done that work, not as a substitute for it. I'm with you Brian and Erin, but this book is a bit too breezy for what is at stake, in my estimation. But then I became a philosopher in the context of Hegel's Phenomenology and Logic -- so it is probably me that is behind the curve.

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