

REVIEW ESSAY/ESSAI CRITIQUE

Rupturing Theories of Affect and Film Theory: The Potentialities of Brinkema's Revival of Form

Eugenie Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014; 368 pages. ISBN: 978-0822356561.

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A focus on spectatorship, viewers, and subjects is dominant within film theory since the emergence of psychoanalytic approaches in the 1970s. Initially fostered by the work of theorists such as Christian Metz, Jean-Louis Baudry, and Laura Mulvey, film theory became concerned with the act of watching films through discussions of the cinematic apparatus, the transcendental subject, the masculine gaze, and other concepts of psychoanalytic film theory. Eventually, these concepts were contested and gave way to a series of other conceptualizations of subjects, reactions, spectators, and viewers as cognitive, phenomenological, Deleuzian, and cultural theories explored the nuances of the subject's activity and passivity while watching motion images. Eugenie Brinkema's book is a timely and radical challenge within film theory as it revives the close reading of form, or the filmic object, that has been overlooked in favour of interpreting the act of watching a film. In addition to film theory, *The Forms of the Affects* also confronts theories of affect. Calling for a close reading of form and affect, Brinkema highlights the tendency of theorists, inspired by the affective turn, to embrace a creative and ambiguous discourse as opposed to outlining a rigorous set of definitions and explanations. This tendency that Brinkema critiques, one especially popular among Deleuzian theorists, is a strategy that seeks to open up the new and escape the constraints of scholarly writing. While a focus on the spectator in film theory and the inclination towards ambiguity in theories of affect generates important thinking, Brinkema calls our attention to the consequences of these trends. By challenging dominant discourses within these fields, she opens up a multiplicity of capacities that can rethink, undo, and even strengthen current practices in film theory and theories of affect. Because I see these chal-

lenges as the most radical potentialities of the book, I will not delve into the micro level of the book where Brinkema engages in close readings of films. Instead, this critical review essay maps the impacts this theoretical offensive has on the philosophical discourses interconnected within the text.

It is not a book; it is a rupture. Brinkema's text has the capacity to make any reader uncomfortable because she launches polemics against a number of theoretical positions and combines continental philosophical concepts without any regard for philosophical lineages. Within the book she sets a formidable task for herself in terms of the challenges she poses (as outlined above), the range of philosophical texts she amalgamates, and the films she attempts to read anew. However, she does not attempt to disguise her attacks and the difficult task she assigns herself. As she states, "I have written this book as a polemic, and thus I have chosen to write about formal affectivity in relation to texts that lure a critical response that ties affects either to narrative (narratives of grief, narratives of terror) or to spectatorial sensations or rumblings (a seemingly provoked disgust)." (179) In her attempt to break through the tendencies of theorists writing on affect and film, Brinkema selects films with well-established critical reputations within the positions she seeks to counter. The theoretical diversity of her book provides her with a range of concepts that assist her breaking through film theory's affinity for spectatorship as the site of meaning and debate. Brinkema interweaves a range of philosophical concepts from Lacan, Derrida, Heidegger, Freud, Nietzsche, Deleuze, among others. At a micro level, this theoretical interweaving produces a series of thorough and thought-provoking readings of affect and form within a distinct set of films—these include *Psycho* (Hitchcock 1960), *Wild at Heart* (Lynch 1992), *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* (Greenaway 1989), and *Zorns Lemma* (Frampton 1970). However, what emerges at the macro level is a profound multiplicity of fractures that open up unique pathways across film theory, theories of affect, and Brinkema's work itself. Although she traverses the canon of continental philosophy, the most profound breach occurs in her engagement with Deleuze, Spinoza, and, moreover, Deleuzian theories of affect.

Brinkema applies pressure on the creative and ambiguous discourse of Deleuzian theories of affect and film that demands them to be more Deleuzian. In fact, Brinkema charges most works in film theory that embrace Deleuze and theories of affect as going against Deleuze's philosophy. As she argues, "There is a formula for work on affect, and it turns on a set of shared terms: speed, violence, agita-

tion, pressures, forces, intensities.” (xiii) Because many of these works follow a similar pattern in their reaction against psychoanalytic film theory in order to assert the visceral connections between spectator and image, Brinkema finds them to be recycling the same claims. In a polemical style that is consistent throughout the book, Brinkema boldly claims that, “against much of the spirit of Deleuze’s philosophy, which celebrated the minor, the changeable, and the multiple, Deleuzian theories of affect offer all repetition with no difference.” (xiii) While Deleuzian theories of affect have more capacities than Brinkema grants them, her charge is one that must be addressed by any future exploration of cinema by Deleuzian theories of affect yet to come. The polemic results in more than a split. One can agree with Brinkema that Deleuzian theories of affect are repetitive and too ambiguous, and one can disagree with her and defend the creative discourse that refuses to reterritorialize in the form of definitions and structures. However, Brinkema pushes further in her attack on Deleuzian theories of affect as she ventures back through Deleuze, as well as Spinoza, to open up the capacity of affect in relation to form. Rather than simply taking a side (for or against Deleuze), Brinkema makes a more profound contribution to film theory and theories of affect by introducing a new line of thought as an alternative mode that reinvigorates a Deleuzian discourse she reads as stagnant and redundant.

In the ten points that structure her preface, Brinkema maps a series of questions, concerns, and goals that could constitute in and of themselves an important contribution to theories of affect. Motivated by what she perceives as a lack of formal analysis and an overwhelming focus on the subject, she takes film theory to task in order to set up a return to form. A renewed focus on form has radical consequences for film theory and Deleuzian theories of affect alike. As she states,

This book’s insistence on the formal dimension of affect allows not only for specificity but for the wild and many fecundities of specificity: difference, change, the particular, the contingent (*and*) the essential, the definite, the distinct, all dense details, and—again, to return to the spirit of Deleuze—the minor, inconsequential, secret, atomic. Treating affect in such a way deforms any coherence to ‘affect’ in the singular, general, universal and transforms it into something not given in advance, not apprehendable except through the thickets of formalist analysis. (xv)

In her turn to form, Brinkema maps a theoretical stake that foregrounds aspects of Deleuze’s philosophy that current trends bridging

Deleuzian theories of affect and film overlook. One of the foremost issues Brinkema takes with these Deleuzian theories of affect is the methods they employ to discuss affect in relation to film because they seem to continuously defer and deny any particular or definite assertions in favour of an ambiguous discourse that posits a multiplicity of openings, fragments, undoings, lines of flight, and becomings. While this ambiguous discourse embraces aspects of Deleuze's philosophy and generates many thought-provoking impressions, the formulaic processes that have begun to concretize within this discourse mimic precisely the initial, stagnant discourse (mainly psychoanalytic film theory) that theories of affect sought to unravel. Therefore, whether or not one agrees with Brinkema's charge against Deleuzian theories of affect, one of the most important contributions *The Forms of the Affects* makes to Deleuzian film theory is a well-structured challenge to ongoing practices. To overlook Brinkema's text as a Deleuzian film theorist is likely the result of two outcomes: the first option identifies within her critique the recognition that she is correct and that the Deleuzian discourse has become aligned with the singular, general, and universal and, as a result, a theorist may seek to disavow that recognition; or, the second option may view Brinkema as pseudo-Deleuzian and, consequently, claim she is unable to understand the nuances of Deleuzian affect theory let alone formulate a critique of any merit, which could result in a theorist dismissing her book outright. However, both responses miss the opportunity to engage with a stimulating challenge that offers the capacity to augment and reimagine Deleuzian theories of affect as well as the capacity to strengthen and regenerate the current trends within the discourse on film by mapping the shortcomings of Brinkema's critique—if indeed there are shortcomings.

Brinkema crucially sets her sights on a key concept within the Deleuzian arsenal: force. Theories of affect, especially Deleuzian lineages, tend to embrace force and forces as an integral component of affect, if not taking force to be the component that comprises affect altogether. Affects are forces. However, Brinkema does not simply accept this relation between affect and force. To investigate this relation, Brinkema seeks to map where force and affect interconnect in order to think through the concept of force in relation to the analysis of film. Within the book, she argues, "that *it is only because one must read for it that affect has any force at all.*" (38) This claim is radical because she is arguing for reading as opposed to feeling affect, which shifts the focus from the theorist's body to the bodies within the images. Brinkema's insistence on close reading is another important contribution to film theory. Her claim that the

force of affect arises from close reading counters the visceral discourses of Deleuzian and phenomenological theories of affect that assert cinematic sensations are felt by the body. But, perhaps, reading does not need to privilege mind over body. As Brinkema states, "The intensity of that force derives from the textual specificity and particularity made available uniquely through reading." (38) There is a push away from the spectator and towards the text that stresses formal analysis, but Brinkema does not restrict what is used to do the reading. We may feel and we may see film form, nonetheless, we must decipher what generates this feeling and seeing. By reading the formal processes that affect and are affected as opposed to identifying the feeling and seeing incurred by a spectator, Brinkema urges us to embrace, "the vitality of all that is not known in advance of close reading, the surprising enchantments of the new that are not uncovered by interpretation but produced and brought into being as its activity." (38) Therefore, while we may speak, as Deleuzian affect theorists, about generalities in relation to our feelings generated by cinematic sensations, mapping the formal components interconnected with cinematic sensations creates the capacity to delve into "difference, change, the particular, the contingent (*and*) the essential, the definite, the distinct, all dense details." (xv) In other words, Brinkema pushes us to encounter what occurs within moving images, between affect and form, rather than recording the effects that cinematic affect has upon our bodies, our minds, and our subjectivities.

This positioning of force in relation to close reading triggers an implicit question raised by Brinkema's text: what is affect? Although theories of affect have infiltrated most fields within the humanities and social sciences, the plural (theories of affect) is preferred to the singular (affect theory) because of the discrepancies across the conceptualization of affect. Furthermore, some theoretical lineages, especially Deleuzian modes, uphold a distinct conceptual ambiguity that allows for a multiplicity of creative applications. However, mapping important theorists within the field of Deleuzian theories of affect generates an important and much needed conceptualization of affect that reveals even more potential with or beyond Brinkema's text. For instance, Elena del Río's recent book, *The Grace of Destruction: A Vital Ethology of Extreme Cinemas*, provides a useful definition, or at least a conceptualization, of affect. Discussing the influence that Brian Massumi's work on Spinoza and affect has had on her thinking, del Río states, "Affect in this sense is not a discrete emotion, but rather a transitional event that marks the passage from one state of the body to another, thus bringing about a diminution or augmen-

tation of the body's powers."¹ Following del Río's statement, affect is understood as in-between bodies—here del Río seems to suggest a human body, but we should read body as encompassing a diverse range of assemblages, including nonhumans, objects, ideas, and discourses. Within the in-between of bodies, "Affect is a qualitative experience that is felt, even while it may not be consciously registered. The concept of affect is inseparable from the body's immersion in an 'open field of relations'—open because the virtual potentials may at any time be on the verge of actualization."² For my purposes, del Río provides an important visualization of a multiplicity of bodies within relations that are capable of movement and rest. It is this movement and rest, speed and slowness, that unfold as bodies come together to affect and be affected by other bodies. The forces of these in-between relations within the spaces occupied by any composition of bodies are able to alter bodies and express the new. As del Río succinctly states, "In short, affect is indivisible from transformation and experimentation."³

Nevertheless, Brinkema's claim that the forces of affect develop through the close reading of form will appear misguided unless we confront the intensity of del Río's assertion that affect and alteration are united. Although some approaches within theories of affect might object to the claim, Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, in their *The Affect Theory Reader*, state, "Affect is in many ways synonymous with *force* or *forces of encounter*."⁴ We may posit, for now, that affect causes bodies to alter, change, transform, mutate, or transition, and that bodies undergo these processes because of the forces of encounter, or affect. However, this claim does not seem adequate to the task of defining, or at least conceptualizing, affect. Affect does not all of a sudden appear in-between two bodies in order to exert some altering spell upon everything within reach. Instead, affect can be grasped as the force that arises when bodies interconnect, come into contact, embrace, or enter into some form of relation. Therefore, affect indicates this relation and the force that it generates. As Keith Ansell-Pearson argues, "Affects do not bring about the transformation of one body into another, but rather something passes from one to the

¹ Elena del Río, *The Grace of Destruction: A Vital Ethology of Extreme Cinemas* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 3.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 2.

other.”⁵ There would be no affect without bodies, but there would also be no bodies without affect. Within the field of existence, bodies persist because they continuously enter into relations, which unfold the new as affects are endlessly generated in-between bodies. A body that remains forever stagnant, unaffected, is a body that ceases to have power.

A body’s power is increased by its capacity to affect and be affected, which requires entering into relations with other bodies in order to transform and experiment. These relations exist within an open field because the potentialities of alterations yet to come subsist virtually, which is to say they have the potential to emerge but they are not yet actual. By entering into relations a body can grasp some of the affective force that remains virtual. Massumi’s *Parables of the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*—as a text that is canonical for theories of affect—provides pathways into the virtual realm of potentials and affect. He tells us, “Affects are *virtual synesthetic perspectives* anchored in (functionally limited by) the actually existing, particular things that embody them.”⁶ Their force, or the force of the affects, is apprehended in the yet to come, in the open, in multiplicity of potentialities that could actualize through any encounter. Massumi expands on this notion, arguing, “The autonomy of affect is its participation in the virtual. *Its autonomy is its openness*. Affect is autonomous to the degree to which it escapes confinement in the particular body whose vitality, or potential for interaction, it is.”⁷ If there is one possibility for dividing affect from transformation and experimentation it is within the virtual (the open) because it is in this realm that affect is never yet transformation and experimentation, and only transformation and experimentation yet to come. Affect links with transformation and experimentation within the actual where its forces become anchored by bodies entering into relations. As Massumi states, “Formed, qualified, situated perceptions and cognitions fulfilling functions of actual connection or blockage are the capture and closure of affect.”⁸ But, of course, affects remain autonomous because there are always new relations between bodies that will unfold more of what is yet to come.

⁵ Keith Ansell-Pearson, *Germinal Life: The difference and repetition of Deleuze* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 179.

⁶ Brian Massumi, *Parables of the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 35.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

When a body affects or is affected by another body it involves an actual alteration of the two bodies. As Massumi outlines, when something impinges on the body that which impinges is not infolded by the body, but something, or rather some force, is taken in as the body infolds the intensity of the something without the action or context that brought it to bear on the body. “This is a first-order idea produced spontaneously doubled by the repeatable trace of an encounter, the ‘form’ of an encounter, in Spinoza’s terminology.”⁹ It is Massumi’s use of form from Spinoza that gives us a pathway back to Brinkema and actualizes the radical potentialities of her text. When an event occurs, like the formation of a footprint, we can read that footprint as a sign that a foot left an impression within a surface. However, left out of this consideration is the force between bodies—the foot and the surface. That is to say, the force that remains ever invisible between surface and foot—which is invisible before, during, and after the appearance of the footprint—always already remains as the necessary force, the intensity, the affect that marks the capacity for transformation and the transformation itself. In short, reading the footprint as a sign of the foot is to ignore affect. The footprint can also be read as the infolding of the intensity that actualized in-between the relation entered into by the surface and the foot. Therefore, as radical as Brinkema’s call to read the forms of the affects is, from another perspective, her claim maps a Spinozist line back into theories of affect to expose what was already there: the form of the encounter.

Perhaps it is possible to take this speculation a step further to argue that motion images allow a privileged access to relations between bodies as they unfold. If this is possible then it is also possible to speculate that there is the potential to observe the materiality of the site upon which affects emerge from the virtual in any moment whatsoever. Affect is indivisible from transformation and experimentation, such as the experimentation that brought the foot towards the surface and the transformation of the footprint within that surface. At the same time, the affect, as the force that was infolded and transformed the surface, does not remain within the surface or the footprint, or even the foot. However, the footprint (the transformed surface) does offer us a glimpse of *virtual synesthetic perspectives* that gave it form. In other words, it provides us with a glimpse of affect as partially or momentarily captured. It should not be forgotten that “Our existence is always bound up with affective and

⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

aesthetic flows that elude cognitive definition or capture.”¹⁰ These flows often converge, especially within motion images, and, despite their ability to escape attempts to avoid detection and constraint, they leave behind their trace within the forms that alter and experiment as a result of their encounter. Therefore, Brinkema’s book is not simply a take on affect and form—as del Río claims in a footnote in her most recent book¹¹—rather, it is an intervention, a challenge, and a text that must be reckoned with again and again. Within film theory, film-philosophy, theories of affect, and beyond, Brinkema unfolds a profound and charged aesthetics that calls attention to the particular, to difference, to the wild, to the new, the dense details, and that which remains indivisible from the affects: the forms. Although the world may not pause long enough for us to grasp the particulars of form as it is in a constant state of becoming, cinematic images—especially within our current historical period of video where we have increased interactivity with motion images—offer us two astonishing possibilities: first, the ability to stop and replay, and second, film form itself—primarily the *mise-en-scène*, the cinematography, and the editing—provides an alternative site that captures force. Thus, forms within the image and the form of the image are both sites that can be read for affect, which can open up the forces that transform and experiment within motion images.

This realization pushes film theory back towards encounters with cinematic form and away from investigations of the spectator. Even though Deleuzian theories of affect tend to focus on the effects that cinematic affect has on a spectator, I read Brinkema’s return to form as a Deleuzian affect theory. Despite Brinkema’s claims that she parts ways with Deleuze, I also read her text as more Deleuzian than the Deleuzian theories of affect she critiques as she takes a pathway back through Spinoza. Her recent work makes an important contribution to film theory because she aims to explore affect within form as opposed to the effects it has on spectators. Her assertion is that, “not only is this book not offering a contribution to theories of spectatorship; it should be regarded as a de-contribution to spectatorship studies, an attempt to dethrone the subject and the spectator—and attendant terms such as ‘cognition,’ ‘perception,’ ‘experience,’ even ‘sensation’—for affect theory.” (36) She goes on to argue, “Rejecting accounts that regard affective displacements as property of the film given over to another, a thrilling little gift to the spectator, a theorist’s private buzz, this book treats affects outside the expressivity

¹⁰ Steven Shaviro, *Post-Cinematic Affect* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2010), 4.

¹¹ del Río, *The Grace of Destruction*, 233–34.

hypothesis.” (36) It is important to note she is opposed to—at least what expression sometimes means for theories of affect—because expression is an important concept for Deleuze. However, it is my view that Brinkema is not reading expression as Deleuze develops the concept from philosophies of immanence. I understand Deleuze’s concept of expression to encompass a body’s existence and relations that unfold in any moment. Instead, Brinkema views expression as it is used within a more traditional theoretical conceptualization where expression and representation are treated as equivalent, as well as within Deleuzian theories of affect where expression becomes something for a spectator. This distinction is important because she states, “In place of affect as a matter of expression, communication, address, spectatorship, experience, or sensation, affect will be regarded as a fold, which is another way of saying that affects will be read for as forms.” (36) Within her theory, Brinkema maps her alternative as an active process that unfolds the force of affect through close reading as opposed to cinematic theories of affect that focus solely on a spectator’s response to affect. Also, it is significant that Brinkema rejects much of Deleuze’s philosophy and instead draws heavily from Derrida. While I do not have the space to launch a comprehensive account of Deleuze and Derrida’s theoretical incompatibility, it should be noted that conflict between Brinkema’s theory and Deleuzian theories relates to the modes and philosophical lenses through which she explore affect and form. Although, at times, her theoretical framework is in many ways distinct from that of Deleuze, she opens up, through an insistence on form and the close reading of affect within cinematic images themselves, an alternative to theories of spectatorship that is radically Deleuzian in spirit.

Brinkema acknowledges that her conceptualization of affect and her insistence on close readings of form might appear “to act in ignorance of what motivated these polemics in the first place.” (40) Here she is referring to phenomenological and Deleuzian inspired film theories—such as the work of Vivian Sobchack and Steven Shaviro—where the affective turn materialized as the exploration of the effects that cinematic affect has on spectators. However, she challenges the potential criticism that would characterize her theory as ignorant of the polemics that brought about the affective turn. Brinkema pushes us to read, “affect as a matter of aesthetics, form, and structure” even if that means removing “corporeality, experience, physicality, viscosity, and skin shudders from the discussion.” (40) Despite Brinkema’s willingness to position her theory as removing materiality from her theory of affect, there is a potentiality

to read her theory as less a removal of materiality as such—in terms of corporeality and viscosity—and more a removal of the spectator’s materiality as the site of experience. This reading is evident in her argument later in this same paragraph where she states, “to assert that treating affect as a form ignores the body is to refuse to question what forms and bodies might mean to each other, what form might cause us to rethink about bodies, that form might deform matter or our theory of skin in productive ways—or whether, indeed, the body itself is a kind of form.” (40) Within this argument Brinkema makes a compelling case for why we should not overlook the interconnections of affect and form because of the impacts such an investigation could have upon our theories of spectatorship and affect. Through Brinkema’s mapping of phenomenological and Deleuzian film theories of affect, it is evident that there has been an overwhelming focus on the bodies of spectators while little attention has been given to form. As she states, “it hitherto has been underdetermined what the body can do to form and even what form can do to a body.” (41) And, although she waits until the last line of the book to stake this claim, Brinkema is arguing for an exploration of form and affect because “We do not yet know all it is that form can do.” (261) With this final claim Brinkema is pushing theories of affect beyond not only the boundaries of those that focus primarily on a spectator’s body but also beyond her own theory as it pertains to form. Her book marks only a middle within film theory’s attention to form as a return to formal analysis that does not project itself to be the final word. Therefore, her intervention compels us to think about how form is itself a body and to not limit theories of affect to the one-way idea that the body might be a form—this thinking is beyond what Brinkema suggests herself. It is within this conceptualization, of form as a body, that I find the potentiality to think through Brinkema’s work in relation to Deleuze.

Although Brinkema only makes a few references to Spinoza—and most of them come in the conclusion—her turn to Spinoza provides a pathway back to Deleuze. In fact, even if Brinkema “parts ways” with Deleuze because “Deleuze loses the subject only to hold tight to the body” (24), much of her criticism of Deleuzian theories of affect are issues taken with an application of Deleuze that informs the modes of affective film theory focused on the bodies of spectators, which thinks in terms of bodies as primarily or only human bodies. By going back to Spinoza, Brinkema opens up a line of flight back through Deleuze that ruptures the overwhelming focus on the spectator’s corporeality and moves towards the capacity to think of bodies in a multiplicity of forms, assemblages, and relations—or to

think beyond the human and towards the posthuman where a body is only the composition and relation of parts. Furthermore, Brinkema's critique of this focus on spectator corporeality fractures Deleuzian modes of filmic affect into the open, into an escape, launches a line of flight. She succinctly identifies that "Deleuze and Deleuzian criticism retain—and, in fact, insist on—the role of bodies in thinking affectivity after the subject." (24–25) Attributing this retaining and this insistence to Deleuze in general is an error if we are equating bodies with human bodies, but it is not an error to insist that Deleuze retains and asserts the role of bodies if we think of bodies as the relations and combination of parts. Likewise, it is problematic that Deleuzian criticism exploring affect has privileged the roles of human bodies, but we may also argue that such criticism has not retained or asserted the role of bodies precisely because their conception of a body as explicitly human limits and opposes Deleuze's and Spinoza's conception of bodies. Thus, Brinkema's attack on the Deleuzian criticism that privileges the effects felt by human bodies unleashes the potentiality for rethinking theories of affect, form, and motion images from new lines that embrace the broader conceptualization of bodies developed by Deleuze and Spinoza—and we should also mention Felix Guattari as well.

What Brinkema's rupture opens up is a theory of expression that foregrounds a conceptualization of bodies that is not limited to a human body or even a physical body. Expression, as conceptualized by Deleuze, is not concerned with how a human body represents a transcendent meaning, such as hard bodies in a film signifying an ideology of hypermasculinity in reality. Expression is also not concerned with transcendent sites of meanings, such as a spectator's body. Specifically, in relation to theories of affect, expression explores the visceral within cinematic images, the corporeality of form, and the materiality of the moving image as it is continuously affecting and being affected by relations. Therefore, I argue film theory is in need of Brinkema's rupture because I also see the limitations she identifies within the "host of work on the potentiality of a visceral aesthetics, with an emphasis on new modes of spectatorship" and potentiality she opens up for "a very different take on affect." (24–25) Like Brinkema, I too see the capacity to think through affect and form beyond the spectator, or in spite of the spectator, or even between the image and the spectator. While visceral aesthetics provides methods for reading the effects that affect has on a human body, Brinkema's theory can generate methods for reading affect in, as, and with textual form. Brinkema argues that Deleuzian criticism is using theories of affect to investigate "warm bodies in the theater."

(32) However, film theory can use Brinkema's work to generate a theory of expression¹², inspired by Deleuze and Spinoza, that seeks to explore bodies as form and form as bodies within moving images. A theory of expression does not read the feelings of a warm body and the effects that a moving image has on it. Instead, a theory of expression closely reads the moving image and the bodies within it as well as the bodies composing it—not only film form but also generic conventions. Despite the fact that films can be analyzed in terms of what types of human bodies and characters are represented and for the effects these representations have on human spectators, there is an alternative level, a micro level, that persists alongside or perhaps in spite of this macro level where forms unfold, capture, rupture, burst, and are always becoming in relation to affect.

At the core of her theory, Brinkema rethinks affect in a shift away from the subject as well as the human body (the spectator's or viewer's body). As she states, "Affect, as I theorize it here, has fully shed the subject, but my argument goes a step further and also loses for affects the body and bodies." (25) But, it is important to note here, I read the body and bodies that Brinkema's theory loses as the bodies of human spectators and viewers, and not bodies as the relation of parts. Therefore, the fact that Brinkema "regards any individual affect as a self-folding exteriority that manifests in, as, and with textual form" (25) does not prevent a Deleuzian thinking of forms as bodies and bodies as forms. With reference back to her in-depth close reading of the shower scene from *Psycho* (Hitchcock 1960), Brinkema argues, "Under the pressure of the encounter between forms and affects, each tear loses every body, and affect loses its tight bond with tears. These losses entail, however, many wild recoveries. Cold white tile is not only a place where vitality drains away." (25) Here, at the encounter between forms and affects, theories of affect reterritorialize a new capacity for thinking what becomes within the moving image when allegiances to the lineage of representation, the subject, the spectator, the viewer, and even the human body are deterritorialized. I use the Deleuzian term reterritorialization to match Brinkema's notion that losses lead to "many wild recoveries" because, as much as Deleuze and Guattari push towards deterritorializations that break apart rigid structures and thinking, this breaking apart always leads to new assemblages. Therefore, I acknowledge the fact that this deterritorialization—this

¹² I am currently working on this project in my dissertation: *Mediated Masculinities: The Expression and Alteration of Masculinity in American Genre Film, 1990–2010*.

break from the lineage of representation, theories of spectatorship, the theory of the gaze, theories of affect in relation to the body of a viewer, and every other fracture Brinkema triggers—is only the creation of another cinematic theory. It is not *the* cinematic theory to replace all others, rather what Brinkema’s text strives for is to shatter our preconceived and established modes of thought in order to search for the new. This search is not for the better, the good, the right, or the true, and instead it is a search for what has yet to be encountered beyond the confines and boundaries of our current cinematic theories.

This search for the new through Brinkema uses her focus on form as a launching point because of the radicalness she injects into the debate that tears through the mind-body dualism purported by theories of spectatorship that privilege mind or body. This tearing occurs by focusing on form. As Brinkema outlines, “this approach requires beginning with the premise that affective force works over form, that forms are auto-affectively charged, and that affects take shape in the details of specific visual forms and temporal structures.” (37) What I read as most invigorating in Brinkema’s approach to form is the potentiality for a method that comprehends form as generated by and generating affect in relation to cinematic worlds. Reading form as auto-affectively charged creates the capacity for exploring how bodies are expressed as forces and intensities because the affects generated by bodies in a cinematic world are understood as shaping visual forms and temporal structures. However, I see possibilities that extend beyond Brinkema’s work itself and into the new theoretical considerations of forms as bodies and bodies as forms, which demand we do not stop at form. This is a testament to the power of Brinkema’s theory to open up pathways beyond her text itself. One such potentiality is a move towards the affective intensity striking cinematic bodies as opposed to the tingle felt on the bodies of spectators. In order to map this dynamic process in terms of affect and form, film theory needs to embrace a Deleuzian reading of Spinoza where “relations are inseparable from the capacity to be affected.”¹³ If relations and the capacity to be affected are interconnected then we can link the notion that form—as auto-affectively charged and as shaped by affect—is generated through relations, and those relations are with other bodies. In terms of relations and affect, Deleuze argues, “that Spinoza can consider two fundamental questions as equivalent: *What is the structure (fabrica)*

¹³ Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* (New York: Zone Books, 2005), 218.

of a body? And: *What can a body do?* A body's structure is the composition of its relation. What a body can do corresponds to the nature and limits of its capacity to be affected."¹⁴ Therefore, if for Brinkema form is worked over by affective force then this must occur through relations because forms are bodies with an extensive capacity to be affected. This generates the framework for reading film form and bodies within cinematic worlds as in relation. Film theory could map bodies as they affect and are affected by form, which occurs through the relations entered into by characters, other figures, mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing, and even generic conventions.

Overall, *The Forms of the Affects* is a rupture because it opens up so many potentialities to contribute to ongoing conversations and to spark new debates within film theory, theories of affect, and other fields of critical theory. Foremost, her book creates a significant pathway within film theory through her "initial gesture of shedding the subject for affect." (24) This theoretical move also puts pressure upon theories of affect to respond within cinematic discourses and in the field of Deleuzian theories of affect more broadly. There was always already a focus on the emotions and feelings stirred by affect, but Brinkema calls our attention to the forms related to something we assumed to be formless. Furthermore, there are many more opportunities to build, develop, and extend her thinking that I do not have the space to discuss here. For example, wherever Brinkema leaves me, as a reader, wanting more is a place I identify as harbouring the potentiality for thinking through form and affect in new modes. Although I agree with Julian Hanich and his wish that Brinkema had engaged more with formalist and neo-formalist film theory¹⁵, I also see this lack of engagement as an opportunity for further research sparked by the text. Furthermore, what makes Brinkema's book so refreshing and engaging is her willingness to take risks and to challenge the routines of our theoretical praxis. Yes, it is possible to read *The Forms of the Affects* and make a list of all the theories and ideas Brinkema could have engaged with. However, this capacity to generate so many questions and untraversed passages is what makes her book a vibrant source of potentialities. Throughout my reading of this work I never felt that I could not hide from Brinkema's polemics within my theoretical assumptions and instead I was forced to participate in her effervescent discourse within the form of ongoing thought. In the spirit of Deleuze, *The Forms of the*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Julian Hanich, "Review of Eugenie Brinkema *The Forms of the Affects*," *Projections: The Journal for Movies and Mind*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2015): 112–117, here 116.

Affects dares to confront affect within the space where no one else dared to go: form. Even if one has no interest in theories of affect, film theory, or continental philosophy in general, Brinkema's work contains potentialities to alter the form of your thought.¹⁶

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¹⁶ This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.