A recent study carried out by Nick Powdthavee at the University of Warwick, presented at the Royal Economic Society’s Annual Conference in Nottingham (March 21-23, 2005), was commented upon by the print media. The stories were framed around a central question which the study purported to answer: Could your spouse’s happiness determine your own happiness? The study did not challenge the idea that happiness might be contagious and inhere between individuals; rather the sensational aspects of the stories revolved around the findings which suggested that the only couples to benefit from such good feeling were married couples. The affective transmission of happiness was reported as buffeting them against the stresses and strains of losing a job, illness and whether they owned their own property.

This apparently contagious aspect of happiness exists in parallel to another way in which happiness is allowed to take form across popular and scientific discourse. This is the likening of happiness to a muscle; it must be exercised to stay healthy. Happiness involves an investment of time, energy, money, resources and so forth; it is a form of labour which demands patience, diligence, repetition, perseverance, practice and effort. Happiness is an achievement, and one which you do not have to suffer in isolation or silence. There is a whole consumer industry to support and encourage such endeavours; ranging from a burgeoning popular psychological literature offering the tools of happiness from the people who ‘know’; through to the practices and techniques to achieve happiness which can be imparted through the growing services offered by life coaches and motivational speakers. Happiness takes form as a set of practices of the self-oriented towards particular goals: aligned with success and satisfaction in the work place; romantic relationships (particularly the art of dating and seduction); physical and mental health and well being; and the maximisation and optimisation of leisure and recreation time through the establishment of happy life-skills. These practices are epistemological, cognitive, corporeal and affectual, organised through a distinction made between motivation and habit. An inspirational quote offered to gym goers in a national franchise captures this assemblage in terms that most people would recognise and possibly identify with; ‘Motivation is what gets you started. Habit is what keeps you going.’ We will explore the genealogy of the connection between habit and motivation later in the essay, but suffice to say it is one that structures a whole range of inspirational sayings and quotes to inspire this purposive journey.

Where in the aforementioned discussion happiness takes form as a set of rational, purposive calculations which enable the subject to acquire and accumulate forms of social, cultural and
biological capital, there is a flip side to this project of asset management and investment. Sometimes, it seems, as we have already seen, happiness will simply have us. We should be thankful that there are happy people who pass us by, as by virtue of our proximity, unintentional communication on a non-concious and non-rational register might take place. In the psychological literature there are a range of studies claiming to demonstrate that people can ‘catch’ emotions through other peoples’ ‘facial expressions, vocalizations, postures, or movements’. This literature has a long lineage and is often linked back to the story of Clever Hans the horse who appeared to be able to solve complex multiplication puzzles by stamping his hooves. Although some were convinced that Hans was psychic or a genius, Pfungst in a review of the study, concluded that Hans was attuned to minimal bodily cues which were unintentionally communicated by the experimenter. The establishment of unintentional bodily communication engenders a mimetic conception of affect which has a long history within studies of hypnotic trance, psychoanalysis and studies of non-verbal communication. The literature, particularly on hypnosis and psychoanalysis, is structured by an oscillation between the idea that subjects are suggestible, through to attempts to resolve this by claiming that normative communication is characterised by forms of sympathetic identification that are cognitive, conscious and perceptual. In the context of the therapeutic relationship, Leys argues that the presumption is that transference processes help to refigure the analysand as one who can be ‘distanced from the scene, can see herself in the scene, can represent to herself “as other”, and hence can distinguish herself from the model’ (‘Mead’s Voices’, p285). Leys’ argues that the translation of suggestibility in relation to normative models of sympathetic identification was central to the emergence and disciplinary shaping of the social sciences at the turn of the last century.

Attempts at the resolution of the problem of ordinary suggestibility were also central to the establishment of early sociology and social psychology. Such resolutions proffered the normative subject as one who ideally could withstand suggestion. The model of social influence processes that became authorised within the psychological sciences produced the subject who could exercise will and habit as the regulatory ideal. This subject was one who was seen to remain relatively unaffected by the machinations of the media, and the crowd, which were both considered sites for the flow of anti-democratic tendencies. This was a subject who was ideally ‘affectively self-contained’ and motivated by conscious, rational attitudes that were considered specifiable and measurable. Social psychology from the 1930s was to increasingly become part of a ‘rational technology of government’, producing a science of attitudes to explain the basis of human motivation (Inventing Our Selves, p129). Nikolas Rose suggests that suggestion and earlier conceptions of crowd psychology were replaced by this new way of thinking about the psyche and affective life (Inventing Our Selves, p129). However, the turn to such a rational technology was neither as linear as Rose suggests, nor resolved many of the problems it set out to address. What lay in the background to these attempts to produce a rational science of communication were a number of practical and conceptual difficulties that have refused to go away. These are evidenced by the rise of a sub-discipline of contemporary psychology that has documented numerous instances of ‘emotional contagion’ that disclose the centrality of affective transfer or transmission between subjects. There is a vast array of empirical studies that describe and document instances of affective transmission, but lack a conceptual coherence in terms of explaining the possible mechanisms of transmission.
This has led to a resurfacing of interest in suggestibility, particularly through attempts to understand and harness the role of such transmission in decision-making and negotiation, particularly within business and managerial contexts. In an article in the *Journal of Motivation and Emotion* that is characteristic of many, it is recognised that ‘social contagion’ and cognitive negotiation of another’s affect seem to often occur in parallel. There are numerous experimental studies which are attempting to authenticate one or other version that can be mapped in the psychological literature. The opposing paradigms are presented as competing hypotheses, which of course the psychological sciences hope they will one day be able to resolve.

The renewed interest and fervour in experimental studies in affect, from the perspective of social contagion, have not gone without comment by cultural theorists and commentators. Viral models of contagious processes underpin many different interpretations within cultural theory for explaining the workings of power, ideology, communication, rituals, discipline, self-cultivation and even resistance. There is also a growing body of writing that is considering the importance of suggestion as a neglected aspect of contemporary technologies of the self. This work suggests that ‘government by suggestion’ is an important component of contemporary forms of governmentality. What are fore-grounded in attempts to understand the significance of suggestion are bodily matters that disrupt and disturb the fictional unity of the autonomous subject. This includes renewed attention to non-intentional communication, automaticity, bodily affectivity and permeability. This identification of a ‘suggestive realm’ importantly re-activates questions that were there at the very beginnings of sociology and psychology. These questions were oriented to the question of how affect, fads, fashion, beliefs and so forth spread throughout populations. As we have seen resolutions to this question oscillated between suggestion and sympathy (as a form of conscious, deliberate reflexivity). This oscillation can be disclosed and mapped through some of the contemporary ways in which happiness is allowed to take form. This presents what Hatfield et al refer to as a ‘puzzling incongruity’ when we consider the significance of both paradigms for reflecting upon the question of how affect spreads throughout populations.

The focus of this essay will be on what lies in the background of these attempts to understand the contagion of affect and its distribution and flow. What I will foreground is how these debates have a hidden yet disavowed relationship to nineteenth-century spiritualist modes of communication. The importance of this is to draw attention to how cultural theory regularly uses over-generalized psychological, psychopathological and spiritualist categories with little caution or reflection in order to theorise subject formation. This has led to a range of figurations and concepts for exploring connections between subjects that privilege movement and flow and fail to adequately account for the psychic and psychological complexities of relationality. Rather than approach happiness as an underlying or continuous object, I want to explore how the very parameters which engender how happiness is allowed to take form have an intimate connection to what has been silenced and obscured by such a privileging.

**REACH OUT AND TOUCH**

Many authors have pointed towards the importance of nineteenth-century understandings of spiritualism for exploring an unresolved paradox or dilemma which is at the heart of how
we communicate.\textsuperscript{19} In a consideration of the value of John Durham Peters’ important book, \textit{Speaking into the Air}, Bill Schwarz draws attention to two very different models of communication, which have shaped contemporary media and cultural studies.\textsuperscript{20} Perhaps the term models is rather misleading however, as these are not simply differing conceptual positions, but rather radically different ways of specifying the links and boundaries between individuals, groups, technologies and so forth. These models either see communication as an internal, solipsistic activity (bounded by failure), or as an activity that thoroughly collapses the boundaries between individuals. Schwarz ties these responses, following the genealogical work of Durham Peters, to the historical emergence and relatedness of two terms; solipsism and telepathy. What I want to do in this section is consider one variant of work that drew from what Durham Peters’ defines as a telepathic model of communication. This is a variant of work that has been little considered by media and cultural theory, but that has offered a range of concepts for thinking ‘contagion’. This work is known as ‘mass psychology’\textsuperscript{21} and has developed an approach to communication framed through the concept of \textit{mental touch} and the \textit{spiritual telegraph}. Both of these concepts frame the problem of communication through what Ruth Leys has termed the ‘problem of mimetic desire’.\textsuperscript{22} This problem took form within a hypnotic paradigm which saw suggestibility as a key register through which affect would flow across and between bodies; human and non-human.

There are three key figures who are seen to have shaped mass psychology at the turn of the last century; Gabriel Tarde, Gustave Le Bon and Sigmund Freud.\textsuperscript{23} This trinity were linked through their concern with affect, and how a non-conscious realm of bodily affectivity provided the conditions for rapid, and what was often considered irrational transmission of forms of emotional contagion. This might have included the transmission of panic, fear, anxiety, hysteria and forms of copying or imitation which seemed to have little purposive action. What framed the consideration of such forms of communication was its apparent anomalous nature. Thus, the following example was documented by one of the founding figures of Anglo-American social psychology, Edward Ross.\textsuperscript{24} It is framed through his own puzzlement and lack of perspicuity of how to understand the meaning and function of certain forms of contagious communication within social psychology. Thus in

\begin{quote}

a French convent a nun began to mew like a cat; other nuns began to mew likewise. The infection spread until the nuns in the very large convent began to mew everyday at a certain hour.\textsuperscript{25}

\end{quote}

This concern with how rhythmic repetitions of gesticulation, bodily movements and motor co-ordinations might intensify the spread of \textit{feelings} between people was considered a source of danger or bemusement. This was marked in some cases by ‘boisterous laughter, frenzied abjurations and frantic cheers’ (\textit{Social Psychology}, p46). These could, according to Ross, paralyse reason, bombarding the senses with numerous impressions. The result of this spreading might compel people to imitate with intensities that would cross and mix the individual’s bodily state with what was considered a pathological expression of the social body. Although Edward Ross was a sociologist by training, he framed the object of social psychology, as ‘planes or currents of uniformity’ which were psychic in origin (\textit{Social Psychology}, p2). Ross’s definition of the ‘psychic’
drew upon a telepathic model of communication that originated within a hypnotic paradigm. The ‘psychic’ referred to processes of contagious communication that occurred within a suggestive realm. He aligned the social transmission of ideas, beliefs, affects and feelings with the action of suggestion that disclosed the permeability of the boundaries between subjects. This introduced into social psychology a way of thinking the relationship between touch and communication that was based upon subtle, energetic connections or attunements between subjects that lay beyond conscious awareness. This was a form of ‘mental touch’ that translated widespread concerns with hypnotic phenomenon, as well as drawing upon ‘contagion’ metaphors from the ‘medical discoveries of Pasteur and Koch’. Interestingly the Latin root of the term contagion is kanta’jan which means ‘and from touch’. This model of affect as a form of ‘mental touch’ was considered a powerful mechanism of suggestion. It derived its intelligibility from a widespread concern by many social scientists and philosophers with psychical research (and particularly mediumistic phenomenon); spiritualism, and particularly the idea of the ‘spiritual telegraph’ that posits the possibility of energetic connection between distant souls.

Durham Peters suggests that this more mimetic conception of communication assumed that affects, feelings, beliefs and so forth would spread through a kind of bodily affectivity. This belief was intimately linked to the emergence of nineteenth century media technologies, such as radio and the telegraph. The reception of these technologies was framed through the idea of energetic connection; thus radio was seen to act at a distance through ‘immaterial mental contact’. Although communication was seen primarily to register in bodily affectivity, expressed through a kinaesthetic sense of feeling, it was seen to flow and transmit through an ‘ethereal mode of thought transference’ (Speaking into the Air, p64). This conception of media technologies and their communicative capacities was linked to spiritualist conceptions of communication. These emphasised the ability of individuals to influence each other through ‘sympathetic transmission’ (Speaking into the Air, p78). This notion of sympathy was derived from a more energetic mode of relating, which was not cognitive, semiotic or performative, but rather enacted through the mechanism of vibrational energy. One key aspect of this vibrational mode of relating was its deep disrespect for the separation of the individual from nature and society, and for the notion of strict boundaries between the-me and the not-me. As I have already stated, this conception of communication also derived in part from studies of hypnotic trance, where key turn of the century philosophers and social scientists, including William James and Gabriel Tarde, foregrounded studies of ordinary suggestibility as a key foundation for studying sociality itself. Although, as we will see, suggestibility and ideas of sympathetic (energetic) transmission were to be radically reconfigured, their haunting legacy lingers on. As Durham Peters’ argues in relation to the emergence and framing of early media studies and its borrowing from nineteenth century mass psychology;

Mesmerism’s afterlife helped shape the understanding of mass media in the twentieth century as agents of mass control and persuasion that somehow, via their repetition, ubiquity, and subliminally iniquitous techniques, bypassed the vigilant conscience of citizens and directly accessed the archaic phobias (or ignorance and sloth) of the beast (Speaking into the Air, p94).
Although we can see the echoes of ‘mental touch’ as a mechanism through which the media registers its effects, the object of much of cultural theory is focused upon finding, documenting and analysing those interpretive resources of audiences that allow them to exercise conscious deliberation and resist media influence. Connolly’s attempt to reframe brain-body-culture relationships in light of this foregrounds the role of non-conscious perception and affect. He argues that a suggestive realm is ‘organized and deployed collectively’ within media technologies and practices of everyday life (Neuropolitics, p20). However, what has entered media and cultural theory as an authorised version of ‘mental touch’ is one that is refigured as abnormal suggestibility. This reduces those who succumb to media or cultural influence as dumb, stupid or over-sensitive.

Many of them treat subliminal influences as if they were reducible to modes of manipulation or behavioural management to be overcome in a rational or deliberative society.

Leys suggests that the normalizing of sympathy (as conscious deliberation) in contrast to suggestion became central to the work of the social sciences. It is clear that a discussion of this translation cannot be attempted without locating the social sciences, and particularly social psychology within the imperial and class-based project that it was part of. Although Ross made the study of suggestion an important part of the study of sociality he also located suggestion within some bodies rather than others. He was keen to stress that the normative psychological subject was one who could walk in a path of their own. What we see is the constitution of a normative gaze which socialises nature such that the very idea of the self-enclosed and clearly-bounded, unified individual able to withstand social influence, is produced as the index of progress, worth and liberation from enslavement. These boundaries were seen to be fortified through the act of will and habit that could undermine the profound and ubiquitous action of non-conscious perception and bodily affectivity. The prototype of the crowd as atavistic, criminal, insane, feminine and disrupting the social order provided a set of contrasts that were mapped onto those who, within an evolutionary framework were considered closer to the so-called primitive and savage. Thus suggestion increasingly became a concept that was contrasted with will, aligned with the instincts and located within the bodies of the working class, colonial subjects, women and children. This differentiated those who could preserve borders from those who were ascribed an inherent plasticity and viewed as more amenable and open to being affected. These bodies increasingly became viewed as a source of danger, threat and fear. As Leys argues:

at a certain stage in the development of the social sciences there arose a fundamental methodological requirement to substitute for a self defined as continually permeable to the influence of others a self conceived as having fixed boundaries and a stable centre.

However, this translation has produced a number of paradoxes, tensions and difficulties that although disavowed have resurfaced in relation to the problem of affective communication. It is clear from the discussion so far that there is an intimate link between the translations that occurred within the psychological sciences, and the concept of suggestion (as abnormal
suggestion) that became a taken for granted concept within media and cultural studies. It is also clear that the versions of suggestion that were obscured and silenced are those that are being re-activated in recent attempts to take seriously the question of affective transmission. The issue of how to understand what is felt by the subject as automatic, spontaneous and involuntary is a central paradox which demands more critical attention. As Chertok and Stengers argue in their hugely important reconsideration of the problem of hypnosis, rather than suggestion being considered for its importance in theorisations of affect and mimesis, instead, the image of hypnosis has ‘become a foil for what ought to be avoided if man (sic) is to arrive at his (sic) truth’.38 This was certainly one of the conclusions which emerged from early mass and social psychologies’ engagement with this problematic.

What I wish to show in the next section is that these ideas did not simply exist as academic theories and concepts. They entered into discussions about the nature of happiness, and what might be the best way to produce it. Within these discussions happiness was to take form as a work of labour, diligence and perseverance that repudiated the very concept of ‘mental touch’ as a form of contagion. Happiness was not simply a ‘work of thought’, but was linked to the development of will accessed and transformed through habit. The target of philanthropic and governmental practices based upon the inculcation of will, was the singular body who could fortify their boundaries through simple forms of repetition and imitation. This repeated the turn away from suggestion that as we have seen characterised the emergence and shaping of the social and biological sciences, and a move towards specifying how these boundaries could be developed and strengthened through corporeal, affectual and cognitive strategies. I want to show that although this seemed to resolve the problem of communication, this problem is haunted by the conceptual and practical difficulties with refusing suggestion. I will illustrate this paradox by taking an example from a moral treatise on Victorian self help written by the nineteenth century industrialist, philanthropist and reformist, Samuel Smiles.39

**THE WILL TO LABOUR**

Not withstanding his familiarity with misery in all its shapes, he was one of the most cheerful beings; and, but for his cheerfulness he could never, with so delicate a frame, have got through so vast an amount of self-imposed work … though fragile he was bold and indefatigable (*Self-Help*, p188).

The ‘habit of happy thought’ (*Self-Help*, p339) is a maxim that we might recognise in the present. Indeed the invitation to approach happiness as a future project of mental application and physical steadfastness that exalts itself in the present, does not seem a far cry from the hallows of this voluminous tome. The tome drew on biographical accounts that reproduced a format that we would now recognise as ‘triumph over tragedy’ narratives. Smiles’ project of Self-Help achieved an overwhelming popularity amongst the Victorian middle-classes. Every hearth was rumoured to have a copy of this text languishing alongside the Bible. However, this book did not simply enjoy a local or national notoriety. Its trans-national appeal was evidenced by its translation into 17 languages, where it appeared for example as a bestseller in what were known
as ‘Fukuzawa books’. These were western books which had an extraordinary influence in Japan during the Meiji period and which were absorbed by government officials and intellectuals as well as lay people in attempts to position Japan as an equal to potential western colonisers. Neither did its circuit of communication end at the turn of the last century. It has been said that upon Thatcher’s election to government in 1977, she was to issue a copy of the self-help classic to members of her newly formed cabinet. It is clear then that the principles of self help that Smiles was to propagate exist in a network of communications concerned with questions of governance, colonial advancement and resistance, and specifically with the formation and institutionalisation of some working class men’s attempts to secure themselves a more prosperous future.

Smiles became interested in the activities of local groups of working-class men who had joined together in an evening class to exchange knowledge and work towards ‘mutual improvement’. These groups were to form the basis of the emergence of Friendly Societies and the early Co-operative movement which were to formally institutionalise practices of mutual assistance (financial, moral, ethical) for working-class communities in Britain. However, the appeal of Smiles’ apocryphal stories detailing the efforts of ‘ordinary men’ as well as ‘gentlemen’, industrialists, privates, officers, generals, inventors and producers to overcome hardship and adversity were to have a more global appeal. Many commentators have remarked on how the emergence of new media technologies towards the end of the nineteenth century facilitated the spread of a variety of religious imaginaries, including spiritualism, which were given life within globalising networks which crossed and circumvented the Atlantic. The printing press and the popularity of a literary tradition helped to give Smiles’ self-help a trans-national appeal. He also regularly gave talks, wrote newspaper articles and embodied this spirit in his own attempts to campaign for parliamentary reform and the abolition of slavery.

However, what I am interested in is what lay in the background of Smiles’ advocacy of the importance of the principles of habit and will to the inculcation of the spirit of self-help. Smiles’ religious ethic was very much about life on earth, and he stressed the importance of the regulation of the imagination in this endeavour. The popular maxim, ‘Heaven helps those who help themselves’ derives from Smiles’ ethic, and captures the importance of developing the capacity of sympathy in order to ‘expand the spiritual nature’. Sympathy was constituted as a capacity for ‘feeling with’ an individual; a ‘feeling with’ which was not derived from an energetic conception of feeling, but one which was above all ideational, cognitive and conscious. This emotional habit could be conditioned through ‘doing’; through action and practice. Thus for Smiles the capacity for sympathy was accomplished and achieved through patience, repetition, effort, perseverance, discipline, labour, routine, endurance, plodding and thoroughness. The stories of men of achievement which are told with a hypnotic quality were not stories of genius, but stories of the action of men to overcome ignorance, selfishness, vice and the excesses of the imagination through their own hard work, effort and struggle. This was not an epistemological technology, but a practical technology which emphasised training, discipline and the ‘habit of active attention’ (Self-Help, p26). The habit of active attention, or the will, was part of an anti-mimetic turn which elevated the will as the means to regulate the senses such that ‘the doors of the imagination’ remain closed (Self-Help, p214). This was achieved by forms of ‘bodily labour’ and bodily occupation which through physical training would help to temper the possible
consequences of working only on the intellect, or moral feeling at the expense of the other.

Cultivate the physical powers exclusively, and you have an athlete or a savage, the moral only, and you have an enthusiast or maniac, the intellect only, and you have a diseased oddity; it may be a monster (Self-Help, p255).*

Smiles drew on a rather different kind of contagion metaphor to ideas of mental touch which inhered within spiritualism, and took form within early mass and social psychology. His was more derived from the concept of husbandry; the idea that by sowing the seed, ideas, practices, beliefs and traditions would breed and transmit from a parent stock and propagate throughout populations (given the right conditions). Thus habits would almost take on the form of acquired instincts, becoming involuntary, automatic and unintentional. Habit thus will ‘bind us with a chain of iron’ (Self-Help, p338). Investment in particular practices thus became aligned with the action of habit that re-distributed automaticity, the involuntary and forms of unintentional communication within the body. I do not have the time here to develop and extend the emergence of habit across the social and biological sciences during this period; but I do want to draw attention to the lineage between these ideas and the concept of the docile body and the habitual body found within the work of Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu.43

Smiles’ spiritual-materialist assemblage existed in contrast to a competing religious imaginary - nineteenth-century spiritualism, which as we have already seen, was centred on practices which aimed to demonstrate and open up the possibility of communication with the dead. Spiritualism has been linked by many scholars to the birth of psychoanalysis,44 cinema-going,45 and even the rise of first wave feminism.46 Other authors have linked the rise of spiritualism more intimately to the emergence of the telegraph and electricity.47 They argue that what we see is a convergence between the ideas of electricity as an invisible, flowing force, with the idea of spiritual communication as a disembodied communication which flows through the spiritual operator (medium), much like early telegraphic modes of communication. Within spiritualism, the body of the medium was likened to a lightning rod, channelling forces which would manifest in voices, images, sensations and bodily performances, which were made available for inspection, verification, interrogation and de-legitimation or authentication. That the body of the medium was predominantly a feminine body, and the body of the inspector an eminent man of science or philosophy has been commented upon by many:48 that these were desires to ‘know’ the irrational arguably are undisputed; but what is interesting from the perspective of contagion, is how the bringing of death into life, and life into death also troubled and collapsed distinct boundaries between the interior and the exterior, self and other, scientific and ethereal, and subject and object. As we saw at the beginning of this article Durham Peters suggests that this model of telepathic communication is one that has lingered on in media and cultural studies to this day. But what is the significance of this argument for contemporary approaches to affect within cultural theory?

AFFECT AND RELATIONALITY

What I want to argue is that the paradox between having and being had by affect discloses a
paradigm at the heart of communication. The turn to affect within avenues of cultural theory is, for many, an attempt to inject aliveness into the static nature of cultural inscription models.\(^49\) The idea of vitalism is being revisited in exciting ways, pointing towards the idea of a flux or flow of forces which are marked by territorialisation and de-territorialisation.\(^50\) However, the notion of an élan vital - a vital energy which moves through the social body needs to be revisited in light of the notion of the ‘spiritual telegraph’ which many of the nineteenth-century philosophers and scientists, including James, Bergson and Tarde, were all working with. These are all philosophers who have been resurrected in many contemporary approaches to affect as movement and flow, although their relationship to particular spiritual and psychopathological versions of becoming has been over-looked. The positing of affect as movement and flow carries with it a particular conception of the spiritual that is but one version that could emerge from such studies. It is clear that the idea of the subject as a node within a network of flows and forces covers over the fact that only certain individuals were seen to have the ‘gift’ of sensitivity (aligned with a feminine sensitivity), and that this imaginary was contrasted with the control, mastery and rationality of the masculine observer. It was the man of science or philosophy who was credited with authoritative agency; and the feminine body who registered and distributed these invisible energies. This distinction is important if we consider some of the contemporary approaches to becoming and affect, which differentiate sensitive from insensitive bodies through an axis of mobility and rigidity.\(^51\)

One example of this in the context of happiness are some of Rosi Braidotti’s recent arguments about affect and becoming.\(^52\) She argues that an awareness or sensitivity (if at times painful and untenable) of the flow and distribution of forces central to becoming are important in understanding affectivity. She cites Deleuze’s discussion of his own alcoholism and eventual suicide as central to the bringing of death into life characteristic of his non-dualistic philosophy of bodily affectivity. Her focus upon death (Zoe) as well as life (bios) is a welcome excursion from forms of vitalism which she aligns with neo-liberal strategies of governmentality. These are those that would render pathological some of the practices that might help you cope and endure; what she reframes as ‘whatever gets you through the day’. As she argues, ‘Happiness, in this scheme of thought, is a political question and the role of the state is to enhance and not hinder humans in their striving to become all they are capable of’ (Transpositions, p230). However, what is perhaps overlooked in Braidotti’s figuration is the importance of particular models of psychopathology and spirituality which are deployed and mobilized with little caution or reflection. Deleuze was entranced, one might say, with the creative mania of Artaud,\(^53\) and with the notion of the ‘crack’ that was so elegantly described by F. Scott Fitzgerald in his novel, The Crack up. This novel recounts his experiences of eventual (alcoholic) breakdown and nervous exhaustion. Dale argues that Deleuze and Guattari ‘employ Artaud as a model for their conception of an alternative mode of thought which they call schizoanalytic’ (‘Antonin Artaud’, p86).

The notions of psychopathology deployed by Deleuze and echoed in Braidotti’s discussion are those which would equate madness to a form of creative insanity or ‘poetic fire’.\(^54\) The condition of madness as a form of poetic fire relates to a nineteenth century version of moral insanity that viewed madness, or ‘cracking up’ to use Deleuze’s terminology, as a condition of error or deception. Moral insanity was thus a (mis) association of ideas, accidental (and
often creative) connections and unnatural associations. The mind was delirious, ‘going off the tracks’, deluding judgement and will. Within this reconfiguration of the mind as a creative reasoning apparatus, came a restructuring of those elements of mind seen to play a part in this active process. The assemblage of elements which made up this discursive space included a fascination with ‘twilight states’, such as reverie, illusions, somnambulism, hypnoticism and sleep and dreaming. One key distinction which was mobilized was one that differentiated the imagination from the intellect, and linked the creative action of the imagination with both madness and genius. The imagination was constituted therefore as a fantastical space of ‘creative reverie’ where new and novel associations could be made. Within the psychiatric nomenclature of the time forms of moral insanity were differentiated from other forms of madness that were considered congenital, where intellectual and creative powers have either decayed, weakened or been entirely obliterated. These distinctions were mapped onto distinctions which were gendered, sexed, raced and classed, and were to be radically reconfigured with the shift to molecular psychiatry at the turn of the last century, which unified madness as an expression of degeneracy.

Braidotti discusses key female literary authors and writers, including Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath, that would exemplify this historical, and some might say mythological link between madness and creative genius. These forms of creative madness or mania were viewed as more complex, and linked to the fine tuning of an intellect which might go awry. However, as might be obvious from my argument so far, these forms of madness were the privilege and province of the middle class intellectual or literary figure, and were usually aligned to conditions of life seen to be peculiar to a man, such as work, wealth, business and family responsibilities. Thus, more ‘simple’ forms of insanity were usually aligned with the working classes, colonial subjects and women, viewed as the expression of inferior psychic and biological constitution. It is interesting that what has been authorised within more masculine versions of contemporary approaches to affect is a disembodied vital force which flows through the social body. The subject is a conduit for such forces, which are felt with an affective intensity, and open and extend the subject such that they are always ‘in transport’. I have tried to show in my argument so far, that the energetic model of becoming which Deleuze develops is inflected through the deployment of a particular model of psychopathology: creative mania. What I want to focus upon and explore in more detail is what is occluded, hidden and swept away by this model that would point towards a rather different set of figurations for exploring affect and becoming. I will start by considering the relationship of this conception of psychopathology with a related conception of spiritualism that can also be found in Deleuzian-inspired accounts.

THE BODY OF SUGGESTION

What became important within scientific studies of spiritualism and suggestibility were the bodies of particular subjects. Whether it was the shell-shocked soldier whom so occupied Freud and his technique of abreaction and catharsis, or the feminine body of the medium and the veridicality of the voices she spoke, what was authorised was the study of suggestibility within a singular body. Although early crowd psychology was concerned with the way in which a complex
set of social, affective and economic connections could be modified and amplified, what was instated was a concern with the pathological characteristics of crowds which were likened to the feminine and the abnormal. For social psychologists, such as Allport, suggestibility mobilised ‘prepotent reactions’. These were viewed as ‘deep-lying reaction tendencies (which are) already present’ within individuals and groups. Allport mobilised this notion of suggestibility defined as a sympathetic reaction brought about by conditioning, to explain the popularity of spiritualism between the two world wars in Britain:

Persons deprived of loved ones by the late war have developed an attitude of yearning expectancy concerning some future contact with the souls of the dead. Spiritualistic mediums and Ouija boards have provided suggestions for the release of these tendencies, and an international craze for things ‘psychic’ has been the result. Yawning when others yawn is not sheer imitation. It occurs principally when we are tired and on the point of yawning ourselves (Social Psychology, p246).

The affective intensity of such responses was linked to the action of the central nervous system. Prepotent responses, although learnt and acquired, were, for Allport, accompanied by the preparatory setting of the synapses which would be augmented, intensified and discharged by certain forms of social facilitation and stimulus. Thus, the experience of being had by affect was one which could be explained through the action of the CNS which would produce ‘bodily changes’. These changes were distributed to muscles, the senses and other parts of the nervous system creating a felt sense of affective intensity. With this move from ordinary suggestibility (as a form of invisible mental touch), to the examination of suggestibility within a singular body, habit becomes the location for automaticity, non-intentional communication and bodily affectivity.

For Freud, of course, the instincts became the site of affective intensity, and repression became the logic of connection and transformation. But what might happen if we foreground instead spiritual communication as a figuration which does not simply point towards invisible energies, but also to connections between the self and other, human and non-human and physical and ethereal, which can only be spoken and felt by some people and not others, or at other times may not be spoken at all. In other words relational connections, which circulate and position people but that are usually occluded and covered over. These are connections which are felt affectively, and which circulate between the self and other, the human and the non-human, the physical and the ethereal and which make it difficult to establish borders and boundaries. This does not mean that the subject is a mere node, a lightening conductor for such forces, but rather that these connections and capacities are felt and expressed in registers which might not be easily available for conscious reflection, or for academic cartography (of the kind practiced by proponents of Actor Network Theory, for example).

THE BODY OF THE MEDIUM

I want to take the figure of the medium as an example to foreground what I think is important in this transfiguration. What was considered vulgar about spiritualism, according to Daniel
Cottom was the way in which spiritual modes of communication were open to everyone, including and especially so-called ordinary folk. One could also be impressed or moved by the sounds emitted by everyday domestic furniture. One such object, which became an emblematic figure of such lowly perturbations, was the table. As Cottom amusingly recounts:

Soon after modern spiritualism announced itself with the ‘Rochester knockings’ of 1848, tables took on a new and controversial life. No longer were they content to live out their day’s impassively upholding dishes and glasses and silverware, vases, papers and books, bibelots, elbows, or weary heads. They were changed: they began to move. Tables all over the United States and then in England, France, and other countries commenced rapping, knocking, tilting, turning, tipping, dancing, levitating, and even ‘thrilling’ - though this last was uncommon (‘On the Dignity of Tables’, p765).

It was not of course the table, or other ‘homely devices’ such as cabinets, musical instruments, curtains and drapery which became the subject and object of scientific enquiry. Rather, men of philosophy and science, such as William James, Henri Bergson and Gabriel Tarde, for example, were interested in the veridicality of the words and information ‘telegraphed’ by the (female) medium. The very definition of mediumship was one in which the medium did not know the words of which she spoke. She was a mere conductor to be judged by the audience, that increasingly was to be assembled within the middle class domestic drawing room, made up of eminent and distinguished men and women of notoriety (this included Robert Owen, the founder of modern socialism). As Pels highlights, what became of interest, within a distinction made between the so-called higher and lower senses, was the voice or cognition of the medium. This logocentric approach to occult phenomenon literally took the voice out of the body of the medium, which was then subjected to various and increasingly institutionalised forms of scientific inquiry. This included various experimental activities formalised through the establishment of the Institute for Psychical Research in 1882. As Lamont argues, ‘research was concentrated primarily on ostensibly mental phenomenon such as clairvoyance and telepathy’.

However, if we take the figure of the medium as a proto-typical feminist subject, she spoke of connections that could not easily be seen, recording events that ‘resounded with portentous significance’. Like other homely devices that were seen to act as spiritual telegraphs the medium, much like the nineteenth century table that Cottom refers to, speak ‘of more than the other world. It tells of contemporary conflicts over people, objects, and language that otherwise are apt to go unnoticed’ (‘On the Dignity of Tables’, p766, my emphasis). Although it was men of science and philosophy who were to become interpretive authorities, what this exposed, according to Cottom was ‘an apparatus of institutions, traditions, texts, practices, personal relationships and common sense’ that characterised scientific reason (On the Dignity of Tables’, p775). If the medium spoke of things that could not be recognised within the framework of scientific reason, then her transmissions pointed towards relational connections that were obscured and silenced by the interpretive frameworks brought to bear upon her words. This figuration of the body of the medium is one that resonates with an approach to relationality drawn from a psychiatrist interested in energetic connections and who was writing in the anti-psychiatric context which...
so inspired the work and practice of Deleuze and Guattari.\textsuperscript{66}

R.D. Laing, like Deleuze and Guattari, drew on a contagion model. However this model of contagion foregrounded the subject as a particular kind of host. Rather than a distributor of forces and energies they acted as a concealed carrier of relational dynamics which he or she was positioned within and could not necessarily articulate, except through extreme forms of bodily affectivity. In contrast, Deleuze and Guattari argued that psychopathology was a form of becoming or creative breakdown (aligned to a feminine becoming) that allowed one to not only see repressive social structures but also to escape them.\textsuperscript{67} Thus psychopathology was figured as a form of creative becoming that would become a model or figuration for how to think about energetic exchange and vitalism. Laing recognised that what is expressed through a singular body is that which often the subject does not know or feel, but that locates her within a set of complex political and relational dynamics. Laing poetically exemplified this in his idea of the \textit{knot}; the kinds of dynamic patterns he had observed in his analytic practice, and which he used the words, tangles, fankles, impasses, disjunctions, whirligogs and binds to describe.\textsuperscript{68} Laing famously described one such \textit{double-bind} in the context of a family member who expresses, through a psychotic episode, the connections or relational dynamics which bind the participants. What we have here is an extreme state of bodily affectivity linked to a particular set of relational dynamics or connections which might usually remain invisible or occluded. This state of bodily affectivity was not simply a felt sense of intensity, but a numbing and blinding repetition of bodily tics, obsessions, fixed ideas and compulsions which tied the subject to repetition and rigidity. This foregrounds forms of psychopathology that are marked by rigidity, but which should not simply be dismissed or confined to habit or immobility.\textsuperscript{69}

These forms of \textit{secret madness} usually expressed through a singular body, were actually enactments of a disharmony or attunement of the subject to relational dynamics which were hidden or covered over. This was a kind of \textit{rhythm analysis} which explored how some subjects might resonate with and through these energies, resulting in blockages or forms of inertia. Laing was interested in the concept of entrainment that had been developed in the work of geophysicists such as Shumans, who had explored how brainwaves can become attuned to naturally circulating rhythmic signals.\textsuperscript{70} What is interesting about the becoming-subject of Deleuze as developed by Braidotti, Latour and Despret is that the subject is reified as having, or being able to develop the capacity for attunement; described as a becoming-aware of the intensities and relational connections that are articulating you. What is missed by these accounts is how the concept of entrainment developed by Laing is marked by sensitivity to a relational process that is often characterised by non-conscious absorption, bodily affectivity and a radical (psychosocial) forgetting.

What this essay suggests is that ‘contagion’ is a concept that might be re-invented in light of what has been obscured, silenced and ignored by the contemporary focus upon movement and flow. The affective transmission of happiness draws attention to the problems of locating affect solely within the habits and actions of the CNS, such that it becomes a singular, unified phenomenon, much like a personality characteristic.\textsuperscript{71} However, the move to reinvent affect as a force that injects psychic energy into social processes obscures the possibility of a more complex approach to relationality and becoming. This can be seen in the comparison I have made
between Deleuze, who has provided a taken for granted set of concepts to this question within cultural theory, with the work of Laing. I have suggested that the direction that has been taken in part derives from the rather different conceptions of the spiritual and psychopathological that underpin both accounts. Although Laing has been dismissed for his familialism, his approach does not simply romanticise psychopathology and spirituality as a form of creative becoming. Laing’s account is closer to a conception of mediumship that was denied and neglected by those practices of scientific authorisation that her body became connected up with. Within this assemblage she was only enabled to speak of certain things. That the medium spoke of practices, texts, institutions, traditions, personal relationships and discourses that could not be recognised points towards a rather different set of figurations for exploring relationality.

The becoming of the subject within Laing’s account recognises that this process is always marked by a contingent set of conscious and non-conscious relational dynamics that bind, extend and link the subject to other practices, human and non-human. Contagion within this account aligns both connection and disconnection exploring both the movement of affect, as well as detailing the myriad of ways in which subjects become-stuck. If we accept this rather different model of relationality, affective transmission is never simply something one ‘catches’ but rather a process that one is ‘caught up’ in. Its complexity is revealed through the linkages and connections of the body to other practices, techniques, bodies (human and non-human), energies, judgements, inscriptions and so forth that are relationally embodied. Happiness is never therefore singular (a property of the individual), or a contagious force which you might catch in a particular spatial and temporal location. This problem of communication is revealed by attempts to produce happiness, which either reify emotionality as a set of practices of the self or are directed to moments of happiness which just seem to arrive. Rather, happiness discloses the wonder, ambiguity, mystery and inexplicability that our attempts to know fail to catch and bring to life. Perhaps the question of happiness should be directed to the question of how to live with the unknown, the unresolved, and the limits of autonomy as a performative ideal.

NOTES

4. O. Pfungst, Clever Hans (The Horse of Mr Von Osten), Bristol, Thoemmes Press, 2000.
8. L. Blackman (forthcoming), op. cit.


19. 'To understand communication is to understand much more. An apparent answer to the painful divisions between self and other, private and public, and inner thought and outer word, the notion illustrates our strange lives at this point in history. It is a sink, into which most of our hopes and fears seem to be poured’, J. Durham Peters, *Speaking into the Air. A History of the Idea of Communication*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1999, p2.


29. L. Blackman (forthcoming), op. cit.


36. L. Blackman (forthcoming), op. cit.


42. S. Smiles, Self-Help, op. cit., p255.


63. P. Lamont, ‘Spiritualism’, p915.


Happiness is contagious too. People who are surrounded by many happy people are more likely to become happy in the future. While stress may damage your health, positive thoughts are able to prompt changes in your body that strengthen your immune system, boost positive emotions, decrease pain and chronic disease, and provide stress relief. While you can create happiness artificially by taking drugs or drinking alcohol, for instance, the same endorphin and dopamine high can be achieved via healthful habits like exercise Is happiness contagious? Update Cancel. acdW IDebDydt WROanwgkluMEWlnDfGZvo fBqgueliYcRr,Jwr aLWyLuBCxVQnC. Know that over excessive emotions will never help to brighten the situation. This will help you stay controlled. Know that emotions are truly contagious. If you are low, it can also bring on low morale for others around you as well. Keep dealing with the problem with an aggressive attitude to find the right Does science think that happiness is contagious? Can happy content spread happiness? A personal example of contagious (un)happiness at work. If happiness is contagious, then what about sadness? Can you make happiness contagious yourself? Wrapping up. This article is part of a much bigger guide on learning how to become happy that Iâ€™m sure is the biggest freely available guide on the internet right now.