

S14

(UN)SETTLING TENSIONS IN THE RELATIONAL FIELD

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This stream is about the relational extra arising when you commit to nonseparation between practice and theory. Once you find your “visceral literacy” (Seigworth & Pedwell, 2023) feet, you cannot set them down. This leads, often, to the situation of an affect alien— feeling the right thing at the wrong time or the wrong thing at the right time (Ahmed, 2010). It is continuously unsettling. The unsettledness prompts speaking and acting, but interactions with the viscerally ignorant often lead to impasse. This is about how the sensations of the world saturate experience but articulating or engaging them is to repeatedly hit brick walls (Ahmed, 2019).

I know we can get to otherwise in the relational field (Manning, 2023), yet the settled horrors continually mediate the potentials of relating. Shaking things up (naming, for instance, whiteness) can send sedimented feelings swirling into solution. But too often shakeups resettle into even more unshakeable impasses.

In this stream, the hope is to articulate the nuances and details of the feelings of impasse that occur when pointing out connections, say, to whiteness and the need for affirmative action programs. This stream grapples with how making connections often leads to disconnection--to impasse. In this stream, commiserating about the impasses arising in what was hoped to be a fruitful relational field is welcome. This stream swells with the weariness of nonrecognition and clings to the hope that (right?) relating can produce fruit. This stream is not certain of encountering promise, but it is not going to stop trying.

The ideas in this stream foreground affect theory as relational practice. Situations in this stream sense the tension between connectedness and living as-if autonomous. It is the feeling of getting a student eval that the class is an “easy A,” after a semester of practicing radical empathy in the classroom. It is deciding to stop flying on airplanes and your mother-in-law getting mad because she wants the family to go to Hawaii. It is about arguing that it is fine to go to Hawaii while Hawaiians beg us not to. It is going to work sick. It is having to argue with your partner about why you must side with Palestinians, despite the looming threat of a Trump reelection. It is knowing that we can get to otherwise through the relational field but having to

navigate unending, unsettling relational impasses. This stream recognizes these tensions and asks how affective praxis can navigate them.

This stream will sparkle with ideas that engage:

- Conflicting and competing affective worlds
- Tensions between the individual and collective
- Struggles arising from the perceived non-relation of the human and non-human
- Relational failures, hope, and starting over
- Impasses between knowing and doing
- Shaking up the settled and its resettling into something worse than before