

S7

IS THERE GEOPOLITICAL DIVERSITY IN AFFECT THEORY?

Ana Pais

anapais2011@gmail.com

At the first affect conference (“Affect: Worlding, Tensions, Futures,” 2015, Millersville), most speakers quoted the same authors, which could have been a sign of the field’s lack of vitality in contrast with its fairly recent institutionalization (Gregg & Seigworth 2010; Clough 2007). Interestingly, in the same year, affect theory started to emerge in Latin American aiming at coping with right-wing turns in countries like Argentina and Brazil (Macon, Solana, Vacarezza 2021; Safatle 2015). While Latin American’s publications and translations increased, affect theory continued to expand in the Anglo-Saxon academy (Seigworth & Pedwell, 2023), introducing new authors and fueling new concepts. Yet, South and North academies do not often seem to intersect or dialogue. This fact deserves serious consideration: if affect theory is truly engaged with thinking and performing inclusive and plural affect worlds in contemporary global societies, how can geopolitical diversity be overlooked?

Affect theory develops in diverse geopolitical territories at different speeds (Pais 2021). In part, the reason for this lies in language segregation and unequal labor conditions in peripheral and southern contexts. Affect is also always situated, thus, knowledge on affect is necessarily historical and culturally specific. Finally, one of the biggest challenges of research on affect is to find adequate tools and methodologies to approach specific objects considering embodied knowledge that is, nonetheless, culturally shaped as well. In other words, embodied/affective knowledge can be pivotal to advance knowledge on affect, namely diverse conceptual frameworks, but it requires cultural awareness or openness to affective accents. Such practice echoes what Bolivian scholar and activist Silvia Cusicanqui names “corazonar” (2018: 92): a mode of thinking with the heart, in a situated context.

Recalling an important debate in the field of performance studies that questioned the imperialist effects of Anglo-Saxon narrative and epistemological dominance in

the field—initiated by Jon Mackenzie with the essay “Is PS imperialist?” (2006)—perhaps it is time to ask a similar question to affect theory: is there geopolitical diversity in affect theory? How can we counter geographically isolated research? Can we listen through other geopolitical affective knowings and bring forth stronger and more inclusive epistemologies to a paradoxical world of felt disconnections and endless connectedness?

This stream wishes to create space for geopolitical diversity in dialogue (not as a ghetto), welcoming proposals from all disciplines and angles that engage with the promises, impasses, threats and settlings of imperialist effects of affective epistemologies.

Possible topics include but are not limited to:

- Modes of (uneven) production and distribution of knowledge
- Alternative genealogies of affect theory
- Imperialist effects vs. epistemological affects
- Knowledge on affect vs embodied/affective knowledge
- Methodologies for the study of embodied knowledge
- Peripheral and south conceptual landscapes for knowledge on affect
- Cultural multiverses of affective experience
- Affect, performance and memory
- Cross-temporalities and cross-spatiality in affective experience
- Culturally aware forms of “corazonar”
- Theorizing situated affect
- performativity of affect
- The role of affect in a global world
- Far-right political affects, mobilization and manipulation
- Disconnections vs. connections