Affect and Ideology

Anna J. Secor and Ben Anderson

> It is essential to realize that each generation is driven to theorize by the particular historical tendencies and events that confront it.[1]

The quote appears in the introduction to the Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg's 1988 *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, a collection of essays that both signified and initiated a new era of cultural critique. Despite its slightly archaic tone, the premise (or promise) seems still to be a good one, or at least one worth cultivating an orientation towards, in that it suggests the relevance of academic thought to its time. Its guarantee is that our concepts are timely, that they have arisen as needed to confront the conditions of their own emergence. In presenting this special issue on affect and ideology, which collects and expands upon papers presented at a workshop on Affect and Ideology at Durham University in the summer of 2022, we orient ourselves towards this promise: that the drive to think anew across these strands of critique arises from a confrontation with our current moment, one best characterised as an impasse, in which the unravelling since the 2008 financial crisis of the neoliberal commonsense that settled from the end of the 1980s is felt in all kinds of morbid symptoms. From where we sit, these include overlapping and intensifying crises, as economic stagnation and contraction merge and blur with unevenly distributed environmental collapse already here and to come. Crumbling institutions and infrastructures combine with the longstanding racialised dehumanisation of populations, even as new dreams of justice abound. Populisms blur with fascisms, and the tone of progressivists shifts from faith in the future to alarm in the present. In all this, the present seems to be marked by too much of the wrong feelings, as well as a new uncertainty about how ideas circulate and are held as conspiracist thinking and feeling blurs with actual conspiracies. All of which is to say that we are confronted again by the problem of the relation between affect and ideology.

We did not open the 2022 Affect and Ideology workshop, and neither will we open this special issue, by supplying a single definition of affect and ideology that would corral the project. There are many definitions circulating of both terms. Affect as capacities to affect and be affected, pre-personal intensities, the allure and feel of attachments, the feeling of existence, as equivalent to bodily feelings, and so on. Ideology is similarly unruly, jumping quickly between an analytic and an accusation: ideas, systems of meaning, ideas lived and felt as common sense, the horizon of the thinkable, and so on. Instead of providing fixed terms, we have chosen to allow contextually embedded definitions to surface and subside, both in this introduction and in the collected articles. Our reason for this is that whatever static definition

1. Lawrence Grossberg and Cary Nelson, 'Introduction: The Territory of Marxism', in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, University of Illinois Press, 1988, pp1-13, p4.

 DOI: 10.3898/NewF:112.editorial.2024

of these mobile concepts we settled upon a priori would inevitably smuggle into this text (and the special issue as a whole) an argument regarding how the two concepts relate to one another, closing down exactly what we want to open up. By refraining from presenting de-contextualised definitions, we maintain these concepts in relation to the objects, scenes and events to which they pertain. At the same time, by opening the space between them, we mean to give them some play, an opportunity to become dislodged from their sites of emergence by entering the blur between them.

The rise of thought on affect since the mid-1990s, just as the deluge of historical-materialist theorisations of ideology had begun to recede, suggests that the concepts are bound up at once with their changing times and in relation to one another.[2] Yet propositions as to the nature of this relationship, such as Brian Massumi's, 'Affect holds a key to rethinking postmodern power after ideology', have never seemed to acquire enough specificity to matter.[3] To pose the question of affect and ideology now, when it seems as though even the conditions of ideology's relegation have sunk into lore, might feel like picking at threads from an old fabric. But we do not approach ideology with nostalgia or the careful eye of a conservator. We leap at it, heedless of the propriety of its domain, impelled by our conviction that there is more to understand. This is the beginning of an open-ended exploration. We wonder, what transpires between the compulsions of ideology and those of affect? And what can we come to sense or to know by attuning to the movement between them?

2. Lawrence Grossberg, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place*, Routledge, 1992. (Hereafter *We Gotta.*); Brian Massumi, 'The Autonomy of Affect', *Cultural Critique,* 31, 1995, pp83-109; Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, 'An Inventory of Shimmers', in Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (eds), *The Affect Theory Reader*, Duke University Press, 2010, pp1-28.

REPLACING, COMPLETING, CONTINUING, BECOMING DIFFERENT

To even pose the question again of the relation(s) between affect and ideology might appear to disrupt and undermine the promise embedded in affect-related work. To the extent that the relation has been addressed, and it rarely has been explicitly, it has often been posed as one of replacement, with affect finally shaking off its dormancy and ascending over ideology. An interest in affect is what comes after the exhaustion of ideology, or rather the exhaustion of ideology critique, both in its classical guise of class ideas enrolled in the reproduction of class power and its more nuanced articulation in terms of hegemony and discourse in the Gramscian work of Erenesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe and Stuart Hall. Instead of being drawn into alignment with the aims of ideology theory, affect theory disrupts the field and initiates a radical break.[4]

3. Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual,* 2002, Duke University Press, p42. (Hereafter *Parables*.)

The thesis of rupture maintains not only that affect orientates to a domain of life that ideology critique missed, but also that the problems, objects and modes of inquiry of cultural theory should be different. The affective turn suggests a rebalancing which is, simultaneously, an attempt to inaugurate a different starting point for social and cultural theory, to foster a, or perhaps many, different vocabularies and grammars. This is a version of a story about the present that also claims that power, or some forms of power, now work

4. Brian Massumi, *Politics of Affect*, Polity, 2015.

post-ideologically, through the direct modulation of bodily capacities. Not only would ideology appear to be conceptually exhausted, but on this account, it would appear to no longer offer the key for understanding how people are made through systems and practices of power (even if it once did). Irrespective of theorisations that emphasise the materiality of ideological practices, 'ideology' would be once again equated to a system of representations, albeit a dynamic one, that stands apart from and mediates affective life. Ideology is put back into place as one mode of power's functioning amongst others. As Massumi put it: 'For although ideology is still very much with us, often in the most virulent of forms, it is no longer encompassing. It no longer defines the global mode of functioning of power' (*Parables*, p42).

Massumi's phrasing implies that, perhaps, ideology once *was* encompassing, that it *did* define the 'global mode of functioning of power', though it no longer does. Yet lurking within affect-related work, there has also been a second proposition: that affect completes ideology critique, adding something missing but critical to existing vocabularies, something that allows for the promise of ideology critique to finally be realised. Here, there is no conflict or contradiction between the terms, nor the radical revisioning of modes of inquiry and practices of critique held as necessary in some affect-related work. Instead, affect arises as a supplement to something missing in ideology critique, a completion of the theory that reaffirms its force, necessity and continued relevance.

This relation of supplementation, in which affect maintains and completes an existing vocabulary, is closely tied to the continued promise of the project of cultural studies, principally the work of Lawrence Grossberg. Affect is added to a conceptual-political vocabulary developed to understand how cultures are patterned and organised in ways that are articulated with political-economic relations and events. Specifically, affect helps us understand something that, for inexplicable reasons, ideology critique forgot – the appeal of ideas, their grip, our investment in them, or attachment to them. As Judith Butler put it, 'Althusser would have benefitted from a better understanding of how the law becomes the object of passionate attachment, a strange scene of love'.[5] Affect might be, in this sense, 'the missing term in an adequate understanding of ideology' as Grossberg suggested (*We Gotta*, p82). Grossberg puts it in terms that yoke affect to the problem of investment, whilst retaining the emphasis on internalisation and naturalisation that has been so vital to ideological critique:

> It is the affective investments in particular ideological sites (which may be libidinal or nonlibidinal) that explains the power of the articulation which bonds particular representations and realities. It is the affective investment which enables ideological relations to be internalized and. consequently, naturalized (*We Gotta*, p82-83).

The gap in historical materialism that the theories of ideology sought to fill

5. Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*, Stanford University Press, 1997, p128.

(to explain how capitalist society kept the working class in its grip) replicates as the site of a problem *interior* to ideology. This is akin to how ideology appears in psychoanalytic theories that pose the question of 'how an ideology grips subjects'.[6] Affect becomes what guarantees ideology. One might suspect that affect was never missing, but rather always there, the disavowed operator of ideology, returned now to 'strengthen a critical practice that has always silently relied on it'.[7]

Finally, alongside theses of rupture and supplementation, there is a third proposition in which *the continuation of a problem* coexists with a dizzying proliferation of concepts and multiplication of modes of inquiry. When Lauren Berlant proposed, somewhat unexpectedly, that 'affect theory is another phase in the history of ideology theory', they drew attention to this relation of continuity with difference.[8] If ideology theory undertook the task of trying to explain how the ideas of the dominant class become the dominant ideas of a society, affect theory seems to pose a similar problem differently:

> At least since Althusser, ideology theory has been the place to which critical theory has gone for explanations of affective realism, of how people's desires become mediated through attachments to modes of life to which they rarely remember consenting, at least initially (*Cruel Optimism*, p52).

On the one hand, affect theory continues the project of ideology theory to address the problem of what attaches people to the conditions of their own exploitation under capitalism (with a concept like 'Cruel Optimism' a continuation of that problem, as refracted through queer theory and psychoanalysis). But at the same time, the continuation of this persistent problem coexists with sometimes intense difference. For Berlant, 'the moment of the affective turn brings us back to the encounter of what is sensed with what is known and what has impact in a new but also recognisable way' (*Cruel Optimism*, p52). The problem becomes dynamic, irresolvable. We feel this unsettling energy in Berlant's quote. To even articulate the problem of the relation between the sensed and known requires a new conceptual vocabulary. One that is very different to the language of ideological sites and articulation that Grossberg, for example, inherits from Althusser and British cultural studies – 'desire', 'attachments', 'modes of living', affective realism', 'mediation', and so on. The problem repeats, varies, changes.

Amid the dynamism of emergent thought, propositions of rupture, supplement, or continuation cannot ultimately close the circuit between affect and ideology. On the one hand, they risk replicating the illusion of distinction by underestimating the *blend* between affect and ideology, their shared critical orientations, and their elements of common genealogy (such as through Spinoza, Etienne Balibar has traced).[9] On the other hand, theorisations of ideology and affect are also *more* distinct than these propositions suggest. For while the ideology theories to which we refer pertain directly to historical

6. Jason Glynos, 'The Grip of Ideology: A Lacanian Approach to the Theory of Ideology', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 6:2, 2001, p191-214, p192; Slavoj Zizek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Verso, 1989.

7. Sianne Ngai, *Ugly Feelings*, Harvard University Press, 2004.

8. Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, Duke University Press, 2011, p53.

9. Etienne Balibar, *Masses, Classes, Ideas*, Routledge, 1994. (Hereafter *Masses*.)

materialism ('ensuring Marxism's theoretical specificity', as Balibar puts it, (*Masses*, p88)), affect theories answer to no single purpose (the singular 'affect theory' is, for us, a fiction). Thus conscripting affect into replacing, shoring up, or continuing ideology, at once 'others' affect and subsumes it to the other's (ideology's) aims. Both concepts become depleted. Perhaps this is why, despite the intrigue of their relation, affect and ideology seem to have drifted apart.

IN THE BLUR BETWEEN HALL AND MASSUMI

We are not interested in forcing affect and ideology into a dysfunctional relation. On the contrary, we suspect that there is more potential to be found in their impasse. Before turning to the papers collected here, we offer a minor demonstration of this potential by reading together two well-known texts. The first is an essay by Stuart Hall, 'The Toad in the Garden: Thatcherism among the Theorists', that was presented in 1983 and printed in Grossberg and Nelson's 1988 collection, *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*.[10] The second is Massumi's 'The Bleed: Where Body Meets Image,' chapter two of *Parables for the Virtual*, in which he conducts his now famous reading of Reagan's autobiography. These readings are how we aim to provide some specificity to the promise of 'affect and ideology' and to establish, without relying on fixed definitions or lengthy reviews, an understanding of these modes of thought for our readers who may be less familiar.

10. Stuart Hall, 'The Toad in the Garden: Thatcherism among the Theorists', in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, University of Illinois Press, 1988, pp35-73. (Hereafter *The Toad*).

We selected these texts not because they are exemplary of determinate fields of ideology theory or affect-orientated work, but because of how they each transform the concept they deploy. Hall's essay pushes the notion of ideology onto new territory, rearticulating it outside of class determination and in relation to the multiplicity and mobility of discursive formations, while Massumi's chapter is actively inventing a Spinozan strand of affect studies for thought to come. At the same time, neither text is primarily an abstract speculation. While Hall performs what he calls 'concrete historical analysis', Massumi is in the process of rethinking 'concreteness' itself through affect (*The Toad*, p35; *Parables*, p4). Finally, although they were written almost twenty years apart, there is a useful symmetry to their focus on the 1980s, a shared though differentiated conjuncture in the UK and USA. It may all be a bit retro, but if ever a time other than our own era (of Brexit and Trump, woke and conspiracy, intensity and disaffection) was a blur of ideology and affect, surely it was the decade of the Iron Lady and the Primetime President.

We enter the blur: the space of movement between points of apparent fixity. The blur is where affect and ideology are both visible, but neither is in focus. Both are sensed but neither fully present. Reading these two texts, we attempt to unfocus them, to let them bleed together, to enter the movement between them. Our reading is unabashedly one that takes its bearings from the style of thought and analysis that has flourished in affect studies, but we do not use these tools 'against' ideology. Instead, we travel along the grain

of each essay, asking, what are the questions that impel each essay, and how does it work through its problem? What concepts does each essay generate and put to work? And what happens when they run together?

Hall's essay has a double aim: to explain the popularity of Thatcherism and to do so with a renewed concept of ideological struggle as an ongoing, never fully settled contest for hegemony in a fragmented discursive arena. In Hall's words,

> What is particularly significant for our purposes is Thatcherism's capacity to become popular, especially among those sectors of the society whose interests it cannot possibly be said to represent in any conventional sense of the term. This is the aspect of the phenomenon that, with respect to the various theories of ideology, most requires explanation (*The Toad* , p41).

While the failure of correspondence between class and class ideas had long provoked theories of ideology, Hall sees in the rise of Thatcherism something more than this classic problem. Thatcherism, he suggests, reveals the possibility not only for ideas to be displaced across classes, but for diverse ideological formations to take hold within a single class. Ideological formations are therefore, according to Hall, 'polyvocal' or 'multiaccentual' and 'essentially plural in character' (*The Toad* , p45). In this plurality, Thatcherism comes by its ascendancy not strictly through class domination, but by 'winning' adherence in a contested 'discursive space'; that is, by taking possession of 'the horizon of the taken for granted' and becoming that to which there is no alternative (*The Toad*, p44). In this arena, Thatcherism enacts a reversal. Displacing the post-war social-democratic consensus, Thatcherism calls forth an alternative 'common sense' that combines neoliberal free-market economics with the social values of 'tradition, Englishness, respectability, patriarchism, family, and nation'. Hall calls this (now familiar) concoction a 'contradictory structure of ideas' that gives rise to a 'semblance of ideological unity' for Thatcherism (*The Toad*, p39).

Hall's essay takes ideological theory onto new terrain: beyond state apparatuses, away from class determination, and into a field of multiplicity, contestation and articulation. Hall's ultimately Gramscian argument proceeds by way of Althusser and Foucault, adopting elements and questions from each while finding neither ultimately adequate to the problem of Thatcherism. For indeed while the New Right surely won allegiance by proliferating new subject positions (the self-reliant citizen, the taxpayer, the patriot: 'linked interpellations, connoting one another'), Hall does not find in Althusser a sufficient answer to the question of how 'adhesion' happens or comes undone (*The Toad*, p49). How, Hall asks, are masses of people detached from their established positions and 'repositioned by a new set of discourses' (*The Toad*, p50)? Foucault's analysis of discursive practices and formations may illuminate the workings of discourse, Hall concedes, but falters when it comes

to explaining how Thatcherism stitches together 'the logics of the market and possessive individualism, on the one hand, and the logics of an organic conservatism, on the other' (*The Toad*, p53). To address the central problem of Thatcherism – that is, its popularity, its creation of new attachments, and its capacity to hold disparate subjects and ideas together – what is required, Hall argues, is the concept of Gramscian hegemony. From a Gramscian perspective, what is at stake in ideological struggle is the transformation of cultural dispositions and the refashioning of 'common sense'. To achieve this requires linking up a multiplicity of fragmented and contradictory discourses into a system of authority capable of ascending over the whole social formation and winning popular consent. This, Hall argues, is how Thatcherism 'became popular', how it sutured consent across society and state and managed to replace one 'common sense' with another.

How does what seemed unthinkable become a bare fact? How, indeed, did the USA end up with Ronald Reagan as one of the most popular presidents of the twentieth century? What can explain the 'spectacularly improbable political career' of a mediocre actor (*Parables*, p46)? The term 'common sense' does not appear in Massumi's 'The Bleed', but what if it did? The 'common sense' that Reagan overthrew was the distinction between life and acting. This 'common sense' (as Massumi does not call it) is what Reagan finds debilitating, a lack of correspondence that prevents him from becoming his own image. Overthrowing this common sense, he transforms this lack into the full excess of his own political becoming.

'The Bleed' dissects Reagan's experiential passage from one state to another, from actor to politician. Massumi focuses his analysis on the pivotal event of Reagan's 1965 autobiography, *Where is the Rest of Me?*, when Reagan-the-actor is challenged to portray a scene in which his character awakens to discover that half of his body has been amputated. After struggling for weeks to inhabit the scene, he finally enters the 'rig' that is designed to hide his legs. Transported by the uncanny effect of his own apparent leglessness, Reagan experiences for the first time a convergence between his ordinary self and the screen-image; he sees himself as an other (*Parables*, p54). The bleed across these unbridgeable perspectives enables Reagan to escape the dynamics of compensation that troubled him as an actor, and to find 'a peculiar form of fullness' a politician in the space of indistinction between artifice and life (*Parables*, p50).

Reagan becomes *Reagan*. By the time of his assent to the presidency in 1980, in the aftermath of all the things that seemed to go wrong for the USA in the 1960s and 1970s (political assassinations, inflation, gas prices, Viet Nam, political upheaval, Watergate), Reagan's *peculiar fullness* resonates with the excesses of the decade. Reaganism *feels* right amidst a frenzy of consumption, pop-culture, and TV. As one commentator of the era put it, 'the Reagan revolution' was a revolution 'not so much in ideology or programs but in instituting the primetime presidency'.[11] This is what Reagan becomes in the

11. Robert E. Denton Jr, *The Primetime Presidency of Ronald* Reagan, Bloomsbury Publishing, p63.

bleed, what he discovers in the rig: the 'technologies for *making seeming being*, for making a life of acting' (*Parables*, p64, emphasis in original). As a politician,

> Reagan not only did not let go of the technologies of making seeming being, he did nothing to hide them. His spectacular political success in fact hinged on making seeming being visible. Reaganism is the regime of the visibility of seeming being. Reagan's professional crippledom, his entry into public life, was the exemplary event allowing the population of an entire nation to develop emotions and ideas along those same lines. As a political actor, he catalyzed processes already at work in society … The amputation written into this script was the 'wound' of Vietnam. The all-too-visible rig was TV (*Parables*, p65).

Reagan becomes a concoction of 'seeming being': an indistinction between what is and what appears, an embodiment of what it might mean to become one's own fantasy. By parading the promise of life-as-artifice, making what might have once been dismissed as fake shine falsely forth not as lack but in full presence, he became capable of serving as an attractor for the 'emotions and ideas' of a population, of an era.

What if 'seeming being' were to bleed backwards into Hall's text, what would it do there? Would it become incorporeal, a quality of the master signifier? For Hall, it is Thatcherism (not Thatcher) that sutures the field with its capacity to create a 'magical aura of invincibility', a popularity undeterred by the failure of its promises to materialise 'in the so-called real world' (*The* Toad, p39, p41). *Thatcherism*, one could imagine Hall saying, creates seeming-being, a collapse of distinction between what appears and what is; this is an effect of hegemony. The bleed goes both ways. When Reagan becomes a political actor, this is also the emergence of *Reaganism* in the sense that Hall understands Thatcherism: that which stitches together a field, props up an illusion, creates an aura of invincibility, of 'fullness'. A new common sense. On both sides of the Atlantic, how relieved people felt, to be able to attach to such an aura, to feel such things, to find themselves buoyed by the rising consensus. Not asking if what held them aloft was 'affect' or 'ideology'.

When problems of 'common sense' or 'seeming-being' slide across the two texts, they become different in relation to the difference they encounter. The blur does not cover the gap between the two texts but rather *makes the most of it*. In the discussion that followed his 1983 presentation of 'The Toad in the Garden', Hall declares that 'the contemporary theoretical revolution' is to recognise that 'the arena or medium in which ideology functions is one of signification, representation, discursive practices' (*The Toad*, p73). Massumi pulls in another direction with his concluding imperative: 'Rethink body, subjectivity, and social change in terms of movement, affect, force, and violence – before code, text, and signification' (*Parables*, p66). The two texts are separated by decades and more than one theoretical revolution. They

could almost appear as inverted images. Running the texts together is a way to dislodge them from these static images, to catch 'affect and ideology' in the blur of their differentiation, their emergence. To chase the promise of what might yet transpire in the space between.

THE SPECIAL ISSUE

The papers collected in this issue do not adhere to a single proposition about affect and ideology, but what they share is a sidewise glance that does not take for granted the fixity of either concept, or that their relation is simply one of succession, completion, or continuation with difference. What this allows is a running together of affect and ideology, a colour bleed that washes into the space between. This is not to say that they become indistinct; some of what washes out separates rather than blends. Our hope is that the resulting 'drip image' may allow for both a renewal of the promise of each term, and reflection on what together and separately they might offer contemporary cultural theory.

The papers all confront some of the 'historical tendencies and events' that compose this conjuncture, to return to the phrasing in our epigraph from Grossberg and Nelson. They attempt to understand some of what composes the present impasse in Western Europe and North America, as faith in the promissory legitimacy of neoliberalism wanes for those it perhaps once existed for, multiple crises intersect and amplify one another, and new social and political movements form and deform and reform. A conjuncture is not single, or easily legible. The unsettling of a settlement is found and felt in the coming together of dissonant, multiple trajectories and events that resist easy summation or simple naming. There is no consoling master narrative here, whereby a single affect serves as the key to understanding the present and the turbulent politics that appear to define it e.g. an 'age of resentment' or 'age of dread'. The list of affects – futility, righteousness, confidence, intuition, settler futurity, love, tension, disaleination – and ideologies across the papers are not designed to be exhaustive. None serve as the master key for understanding the present, that could be quickly invoked to explain the ideological changes that supposedly define today's turbulent politics – the rise of right-wing populism, the zombie-like afterlives of neoliberalism, the ending of the sense that 'there is no alternative', and so on. Rather, each paper stays with and works through a specific constellation of ideology and affect, performing different 'drip images' of their indistinctions and separations. Our hope is that the issue performs a kind of mapping of the affective present, allowing connections and disconnections between different affects and ideologies to emerge across the papers. The enabling constraint of the form of the papers, the naming of an affect and the naming of an ideology, keeps them close to the blur where affect/ideology meet and move in and out of focus.

We begin with the prospect of an end. Helen F. Wilson's paper, *Futility* and

Environmentalism, stays with the sense of futility that some climate scientists feel as they are confronted daily by climate related loss. Overwhelmed by the piling up of loss, confronted by the limits of action, futility settles with a sense that nothing can be done. Futility sits in a complicated relation with existing environmental ideologies, undermining the compulsory optimism of some environmental movements, but reproducing the 'doom and gloom' of others. By staying with the ambiguities of futility, its pervasiveness and the contention that can surround its expression, Wilson explores the relations between the grip of ideas and affects that diminish capacities to affect and be affected. Avoiding easy recuperation of what might be considered and felt as a 'negative affect', Wilson wonders what futures a loss of hope might barely open, even as a future where action might make a difference is closed down.

The ideology of 'net zero' is one way in which a kind of optimism has just about been kept alive, amid the background dread of multiple, compounding environmental crises. In *Net Zero and Settler Futurity*, Jessie Goldstein demonstrates how net zero recuperates the prospect of a future. For those who attach to it, 'net zero' is full of multiple, intersecting, promises – to become green, clean and carbon neutral – that crowd out other futures. It serves, Goldstein argues, to 'comfort the discomforted', to get the idea of the future back on track again, and to provide a seductive sense of purpose amid crisis. 'Settler futurity' is the name Goldstein gives for the mobile complex of ideas and affects that connects and mediates different iterations of 'net zero'. As with Wilson, ideology and affect are blurred here, ideas are felt, the horizons of the thinkable are the horizons of what can be felt, ideas achieve and lose their grip through affect.

Both Wilson and Goldstein focus on futures in crisis times. Philip Conway in *Confidence and Conservativism* explores how conservativism holds out the future prospect of conserving something present or returning a past. As his analysis moves between Reagan and Trump, via Peale's *The Power of Positive Thinking*, Conway shows how to produce the effect of conservation conservativism requires a constant perturbation, such that subjects are moved and mobilised to restore the natural, given hierarchies that conservatism conserves. Conway explores this constant interplay between confidence and anxiety in the temporal loops of contemporary conservatism. In folding confidence into conservativism, Conway parses ideology and affect, holding the two in distinction to better understand both their specificity and interrelation. The former becomes equivalent to the propositional, the later the dispositional, with the problem shared between them being the question of how the hierarchical structure of collective identification is secured.

Carolyn Pedwell in *The Intuitive and the Counter-Intuitive* also holds affect and ideology analytically separate, in order to work through how they might be related. Like Conway, she is concerned with the problem of the affective basis for the reproduction of present inequalities. Bringing scenes from the history of AI into our discussion of the present, she traces how

intuition and commonsense are folded into, reproduced and maintained through AI. Focusing on a logic-based AI endeavour to 'codify human common sense', Pedwell demonstrates how 'commonsense' is rendered impartial and extractable. This is an ideological move that erases both the geo-historical conditions of the emergence of commonsense and the 'good sense' of commonsense, its irreducibility to ideology. Commonsense becomes encoded into the machine learning systems that now reproduce ideology 'correlationally'. In response, Pedwell argues for a 'counter-intuitive' mode of experimentation that aims to produce what Pedwell calls a 'generative pause, glitch, or moment of friction in the pervasive computational reproduction of ideology as common sense'.

If the previous two papers demonstrated how affects become part of the conditions for attempts to maintain present inequalities, *Love and Work* by Anna J. Secor, Derek Ruez and Daniel Cockayne amplifies one actually existing glitch that, together with others, creates the inchoate sense of a present impasse and a conjunctural crisis. Their case is the 'great resignation', in which large numbers of people exited the workforce between 2021 to 2023 in the aftermath of the pandemic measures in the USA and the UK. Treating the 'great resignation' as a mood, they trace the merging of love and work in the shifting injunction to (not) love work. To (not) love work is revealed as an 'affective-ideological concoction' that, in different ways, stages the complex of investment and detachment that now surrounds various neoliberal promises. By staying with the ambiguities and tensions in the love-work relation today, as work is constituted as object for a love given or withheld, requited or unrequited, Secor, Ruez and Cockayne give us a sense of the ideological unsettling and questions of attachment that makes up the present impasse. What is at stake, then, in (not) loving work is, as they put it 'no less than our affective-ideological investment in making, changing, or ending a world'.

Helen Graham in *Late Liberalism and Righteousness* also stays with a glitch in the present. She dives into the blur of affect and ideology as she wonders about the interrelations between flashes of righteousness and the continued operation of late liberalism, with its promises of recognition perpetually held out, but only to those deemed worthy of inclusion. The righteousness reflex serves as a kind of 'starter fluid' or 'individualising sugar rush' that articulates late liberalism's promise, making it present, yet again. Graham proposes that in crisis times, as the late liberal promise is disrupted and eroded, righteousness and late liberalism are beginning to disarticulate. The late liberal promise of inclusion is the subject of intense critiques in the midst of decolonial projects and movements, and the extension of participatory projects. Amid all this, the righteous reflex doesn't feel as unproblematically good anymore. Much like Pedwell's proposal for a 'counter-intuitive AI', Graham performs different ways of intensifying this emergent disarticulation, experimenting with how other affects might provide 'affective fuels' for ideologies after late liberalism.

If Graham is interested in finding ways of holding apart the cracks between an affect and ideology as they disarticulate, Kai Bosworth in *Revolution and Disalienation* turns our attention to the 'disalienating affects' that he argues are an important part of establishing a revolutionary situation. 'Disalienating affects' emerge after the end of the ideological claim that 'there is no alternative'. Bosworth shows that they are a necessary but fragile part of the conditions of emergence for the energies that today gather around the question of social revolution, or, as Bosworth puts it, they are part of the 'desire for revolution'. Holding affect and ideology together becomes a way of performing a 'mapping' of the reparative relations that give rise to revolutionary subjectivities outside of their dismissal or reduction to sentimentality. To the glitches and impasses of righteousness and love, Bosworth maps those affects that follow from and perform intense detachments and the beginnings of new beginnings.

Bosworth's concern with the affective-ideational conditions for the formation of revolutionary subjectivities resonates with Illan Wall's orientation in *Tension and Syndicalism* to the relation between scenes of affective intensity, specifically the strike, and the unruly, joyful emergence of what he terms 'vibrant ideologies'. For Wall, the distinction between affect and ideology is collapsed in a 'vibrant ideology', defined by him as 'a resonant, reverberating, electrifying set of ideas that are produced by, and producing of, affective intensity'. The case from which he theories the emergence of vibrant ideology are two moments from the history of syndicalism. Strikes are powerful, Wall argues, because they can generate threshold states of tension. Tension names both a state of irresolution, and an unruly, excessive, energy that propels and generates momentum. It is felt in a charged atmosphere in which something is about to happen. 'Vibrant ideology' is not the capture and closure of intensity in ideas, its insertion into recognised systems of meaning and material practices, but rather something new emergent from and coextensive with intensity. It involves ruptures, disorientations and reorientations, and the coming to form of a new idea, which is simultaneously a new way of making sense of society that might grip subjects differently.

In the bleed, concepts cross over, become estranged, find new work. Our hope with this collection is to have offered a glimpse of the theoretical potential and the conjunctural imperative for engaging 'affect and ideology' anew, outside of dialectical relations of negation or synthesis. After the affective turn, if we 'return' to ideology, we do not return unchanged. Neither do the concepts of affect and ideology themselves express some unyielding certainty; they always have and continue now to stretch and blur across their own distinctions, merging with the conditions of their articulation. This issue is one such space of emergence, a wide open aperture for the blur between 'affect and ideology'.