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ARTS RESEARCH  
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TRAVERSALS  
OF BEIT  
rta Francis Lyo  
Edited by  
Claire Nouvet,  
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and Mark Stoholski

# NO PLACE

# FOR COMPLACENCY

# DR KIFF BAMFORD, READER

# IN CONTEMPORARY ART

# OUTPUT INFORMATION

Chapter Title:  
No Place for Complacency: The Resistance of  
Gesture

Output Type:  
C – Chapter in Book

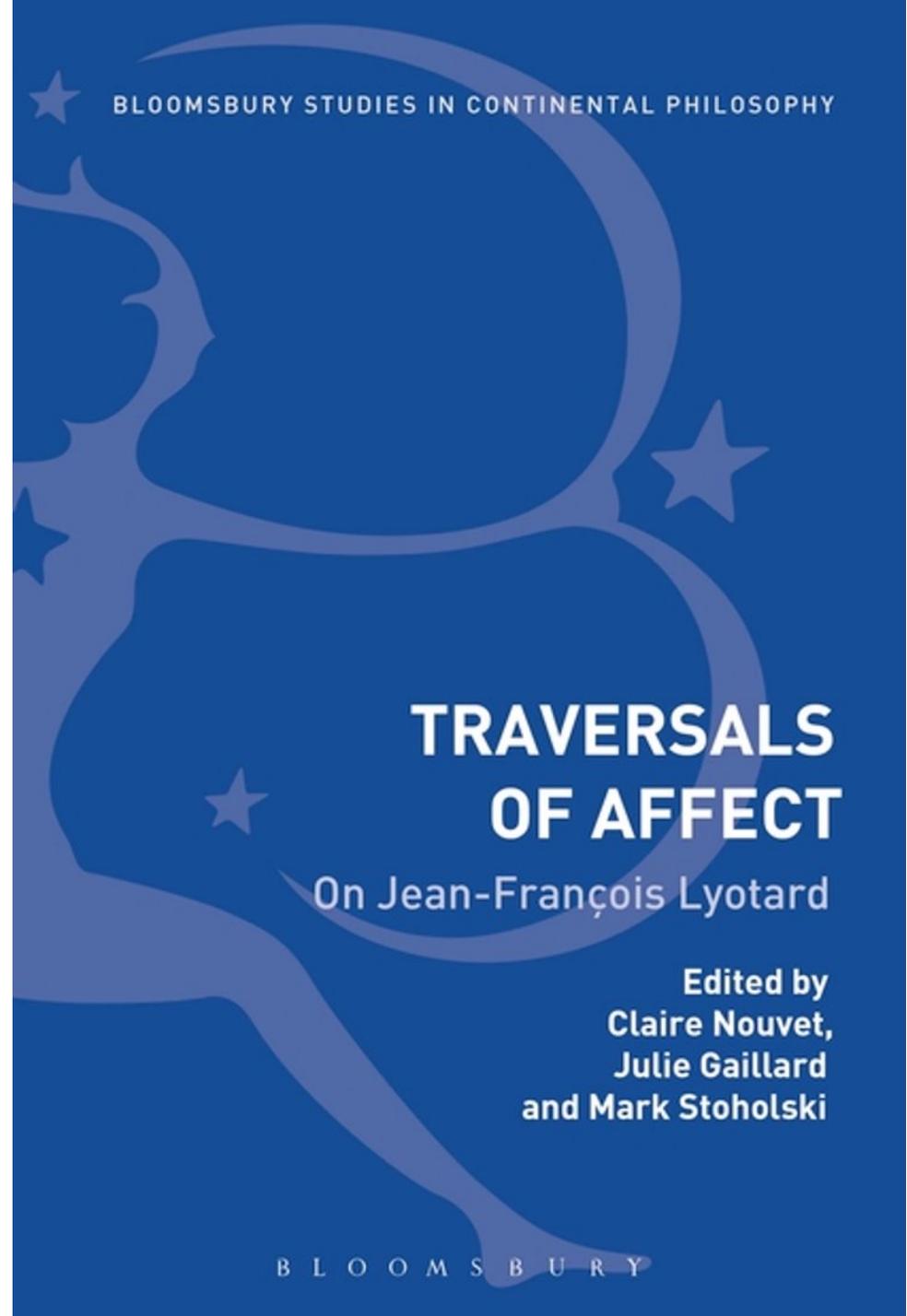
Book Title:  
Traversals of Affect: On Jean-François Lyotard

Publisher:  
Bloomsbury Academic

ISBN:  
978-1474257886

Date of Publication:  
2016

Research Groups:  
Critical Theory



# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION STATEMENT

How can commentaries on art hope to carry the same affects which prompted the desire to make comment? The return of the 'same' may not be possible, yet traces of affect give rise to further commentaries: a gesture that rethinks the possibilities of a performance art archive, as a remobilizing of affect. This chapter is part of an ongoing consideration of how to respond to performance art, furthering the argument that Jean-François Lyotard's writings on art and philosophy call us to do so.

The challenge is a fear of repetition; turning to a performance by the Chinese-born artist, based in Germany: Yingmei Duan, whose work had already previously provoked the writer to respond in the context of Lyotard's thought (Continuum, 2012; Ashgate, 2013). The writer describes how, at a performance in a London gallery, space-time-matter is transformed by the artist, in spite of their personal acquaintance and despite personal fears and misgivings. The unanticipated power of gesture leads to a response in kind: the making of a video piece that attempted to link onto that gesture. The art is in the gesture, not the artist or the work: the presence of the remainder is the concern of this chapter. It is an attempt to evoke the complexity of the gesture, which resists and rejects expected articulations, prompting a transference of affect. Accepted forms of communication are broken down and the codified body dismembered, as Lyotard writes in one of the important but scholarly under-examined essays central to this chapter: 'The body doesn't belong to you'.

This edited book is the first to highlight questions of affect in the philosophy of J-F Lyotard. Developed by scholars at Emory University, Atlanta, the investigation began through a related conference to which Bamford contributed, in order to articulate Lyotard's unique contribution to affect theory.



“This volume traces the topic of affect across Lyotard’s corpus and accounts for Lyotard’s crucial and original contribution to the thinking of affect. Highlighting the importance of affect in Lyotard’s philosophy, this work offers a unique contribution to both affect theory and the reception of Lyotard. Affect indeed traverses Lyotard’s philosophical corpus in various ways and under various names: figure or the figural in *Discourse*, *Figure*, unbound intensities in his libidinal writings, the feeling of the *différend* in *The Differend*, affect and *infantia* in his later writings. Across the span of his work, Lyotard insisted on the intractability of affect, on what he would later call the *differend* between affect and articulation. The singular awakening of sensibility, affect both traverses and escapes articulation, discourse, and representation. Lyotard devoted much of his attention to the analysis of this traversal of affect in and through articulation, its transpositions, translations, and transfers. This volume explores Lyotard’s account of affect as it traverses the different fields encompassed by his writings (philosophy, the visual arts, the performing arts, literature, music, politics, psychoanalysis as well as technology and post-human studies).”

### **Book Blurb**

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“This collection of essays by globally acknowledged experts and newer voices in the field will doubtless set the tone for a rediscovery and reappraisal of Lyotard's considerable contributions to affect theory and its applications. More fundamentally, it sketches a performative metaphilosophy through its encounter with a thinker who enacts philosophy as a perpetual, precarious traversal.”

**Matthew R. McLennan, Assistant Professor, School of Public Ethics, Saint Paul University, Canada**



“Anger, Joy, Disappointment, Fear, Hope, Anxiety: our era is marked by affect as its dominant feature. In the recent turn to emotion and affect in philosophy, few works have the feeling and subtlety of Jean-François Lyotard's essays. His wise and knowing meditations on the ethics, aesthetics, psychology and politics of affect deserve even deeper consideration than his banner ideas around the postmodern and the sublime. With this outstanding collection of chapters, by leading Lyotard scholars, we can now reflect carefully and sensitively on the affects governing our increasingly desperate actions in private and public life. Lyotard wanted to buy us a different kind of time and gift us different modes of attention to passions and their causes. This collection achieves just that.”

**James Williams, Honorary Professor of Philosophy, Deakin University, Australia**

Keywords:

Critical Theory

Philosophy

Jean-François Lyotard

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