



## The Power at the End of the Economy

By Brian Massumi

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Rational self-interest is often seen as being at the heart of liberal economic theory. In *The Power at the End of the Economy* Brian Massumi provides an alternative explanation, arguing that neoliberalism is grounded in complex interactions between the rational and the emotional. Offering a new theory of political economy that refuses the liberal prioritization of individual choice, Massumi emphasizes the means through which an individual's affective tendencies resonate with those of others on infra-individual and transindividual levels. This nonconscious dimension of social and political events plays out in ways that defy the traditional equation between affect and the irrational. Massumi uses the Arab Spring and the Occupy Movement as examples to show how transformative action that exceeds self-interest takes place. Drawing from David Hume, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Niklas Luhmann and the field of nonconsciousness studies, Massumi urges a rethinking of the relationship between rational choice and affect, arguing for a reassessment of the role of sympathy in political and economic affairs.

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## Editorial Review

### Review

"Brian Massumi *infuses* affect, incipient intuitions, dividuality, the detonation of trust, the event, and variations of intensity into shaky neoliberal categories of the individual, choice, interest, and system rationality, exploding the assemblage from the inside. Such a strategy also enables him to probe contagious sites of counterpower often neglected by critics of neoliberalism. A bracing book that exceeds the practices it subverts."

(William Connolly, author of *The Fragility of Things: Self-Organizing Processes, Neoliberal Fantasies, and Democratic Activism*)

"For the first time, Brian Massumi develops the concepts of affect and virtuality in relation to the moral-philosophical and political-philosophical traditions that focus on the relation between reason and the passions, as well as in the specific context of what has come to be known as neoliberal capitalism. Here Massumi not only consolidates and condenses the arguments of his previous books, he also thrusts them into new territory in a way that relates to contemporary sociopolitical conditions. *The Power At the End of the Economy* is an important, and even essential, work."

(Steven Shaviro, author of *Without Criteria: Kant, Whitehead, Deleuze, and Aesthetics*)

"Behavioral economists who study the psychology of decision making should engage this study of potential, virtual, and kinetic emotions, given that emotions are what move people to action. Going beyond Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Commonwealth* and Timothy Wilson's *Strangers to Ourselves*, this is a book for those interested in cultural theory. ... Highly recommended. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty and professionals."

(K. Tölölyan *Choice* 2015-09-01)

"... powerful and convincing in its theoretically innovative, productive intertwining of political philosophy, cognitive psychology and Luhmann's systems theory."

(Hannah Richter *Constructivist Foundations* 2015-11-01)

### About the Author

Brian Massumi is Professor of Communication at the University of Montreal. He is the author of several books, including *What Animals Teach Us about Politics* and *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*, both also published by Duke University Press.

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