At the end of an article in the journal *Body & Society* called “How to Talk About the Body?” (Latour 2004), Bruno Latour mentions the neurophilosopher Paul Churchland who carries a colour picture of his wife in his wallet. The picture doesn’t show her face, however, but a scan of her brain. In Latour’s argument, this example functions to criticise the traditional opposition between the body as an object and as a subject, between the body we have and the body we are, between the known, objectified body of scientific knowledge and the lived, subjective body of phenomenology. Both ways of articulating the body are reductive, according to Latour. Stating that your personality is nothing but the macro structure of your brain would be a very limitative claim. But the opposite claim, that seeing your wife through a brain-scan is a techno-scientific objectification of her personality, is just as reductive because of its denial of the technological mediation of the subjectively lived body. Our usual notions of subjective personhood are also mediated through artificial means and technologies, such as photography. Why not take Paul Churchland’s excentricity seriously, adds Latour, and see how he

is learning to become sensitive, through the mediations of instruments, to hitherto undetectable differences in the spin of electrons of his cherished wife’s brain. Paul may be perfectly right in saying that we should all become sensitive to electrical differences in each other’s brains and that this sensitivity, this learning to be affected, will make us have a richer and more interesting understanding of other’s personality than mere boring facial expressions. (Latour 2004, 225)
The example’s rhetorical effect has to do with its simultaneous condensation and denial of at least four oppositions: the opposition between the warmest of feelings, love, and cold sophisticated instruments; between individual personality and general scientific fact; between what is private, accessible only from the inside for ourselves, and public, accessible externally by others; and between what is visible, and therefore evident, and invisible and mysterious because of it. Brain-scans promise to disclose something of our very essence as persons as they open our minds for visual inspection—for ourselves and for others as well. In Paul Churchland’s vision of the future—at least as it is implicitly suggested in Latour’s account of it—he wouldn’t need to pay a penny for his wife’s thoughts any longer; they would be as clear to him as if she had told them herself.

The hint remains implicit, but we can see that at least two other oppositions are involved as well, perhaps the most important ones, in particular in their combination: those between mind and body and between subject and object. Brain-scans seem to collapse these oppositions, most spectacularly in those cases when people are able to watch real time functional scans of their own brains, since the subject watches its own mental activity as an objective, bodily process at the very moment that it takes place. In this vein artist Susan Aldworth has told how her fascination with scans of the brain started when she underwent a cerebral angiogram. She was conscious and was able to see the monitors, which, she told later, was one of the strangest experiences of her life. 'Looking up at the screens, I could see the inside of my brain with my eyes—my brain was working, while I was looking inside it. I will never make sense of that moment'.2 This confusion, this *mise-en-abime*, the vertiginous experience of looking with your brain into your own brain, looking at your own looking, was the starting point of a series of works in which she used brain-scans of various kinds.

I will come back to Aldworth’s work and in particular Jenny Slatman’s interpretation of it at the end of this chapter. My purpose here is to unpack Latour’s example as an instance of what it means to ‘learn to be affected’, taking it more seriously than Latour might have meant it to be. My question is, what kind of conditions would have to be met in order for Churchland/Latour’s vision to become true? Under what circumstances can brain-scans become vehicles for the same kind of feelings as

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