Affective relationships are misrepresented and perhaps even misperceived. Often, when we notice affect, it is through relationships like those that entail a projection on the part of the perceiver, which are weighted on the side of the perceiver's feelings of "direct" connection that is in fact projective (Cartwright & Benin 2006). Affect is thus subject to amplified intersubjective dynamics that is not y in the control of the person whose affect is felt," interpreted, or narrated by another. This fact means relationships can easily default to a system of normative judgments creep in, on the part of the line and the one whose feelings are "felt" by an Pity expressed toward one with a disability may he shame, anger, or disgust in the person who was allowed to the beneficiary of pity as largesse. This fact bears a close relationship to stigma. It is evident in the use of "affect" to imply that someone is affected by or with conceit: "She spoke with an affected l her voice." We use this phrase to condemn the person in question for performing his or her affect "unnaturally" as a charade, as if we all shared a template for norm Ature. We mean that affective patterns are modeled after or against normative manners of acting in public. But because affects are difficult to define and deal with, it is often easier to label behaviors as "affect" or "affect-like" than to attempt to understand them. The latter task is further complicated by the fact that affect is often experienced as a complex interplay of physiological, cognitive, and emotional processes. As a result, it can be difficult to determine whether a particular behavior is truly affective or simply a manifestation of some other underlying process. In order to better understand the nature of affective behavior, it is important to consider the role of context in shaping our perceptions of others. For example, if we are in a situation where we expect people to behave in a certain way (e.g., a social event), we may be more likely to interpret their behavior as affective even if it is not necessarily so. On the other hand, if we are in a more informal setting, we may be less inclined to attribute affective behavior to others. Ultimately, the nature of affective behavior is complex and depends on a variety of factors, including the context in which it occurs and our own expectations and biases.
Blindness
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Blindness is a condition of the flesh as well as a signifying operation. William R. Paulson maintains that blindness “means very different things, and moreover it is very different things, at different times, different places, and in different kinds of writing” (1987, 4). Such a critical stance can lead the field of disability studies to analyze disability in a manner that reckons with both the ways that bodies are made accessible through language and the ways that bodies exceed language. The state of visual impairment long ago assumed a metaphoric plasticity, making literal blindness serve as a figurative marker for other diminished capacities. This interplay permeates, for example, one of the West’s foundational texts, Sophocles’s version of the story of Oedipus. It is evident in the confrontation between Tiresias, the blind prophet, and the figuratively blind Oedipus, as well as in the ghastly scene where Oedipus literally blinds himself upon gaining his figurative sight (Stiker 1999).

Perhaps the earliest English-language example of blindness’s physical/metaphysical conflation occurs in the tenth-century Blickling Homilies. The narrator of the second quire, Quinquagesima Sunday, observes of the blind beggar of Jericho, “Right was it that the blind man sat by the way begging, because the Lord himself hath said, ‘I am the way of truth,’ and he who knows not the brightness of the eternal light is blind; and he liveth and believeth who sitteth by the way begging, and prays for the eternal light, and ceaseth not” (Morris 1880, 16). This exegesis clearly demonstrates a transformation of the physically blind beggar into a surrogate intransigent spiritual blindness of all sinners. Taking care of the blind beggar, sinners can move closer to Christ and therefore erase their own metaphorical blindness. In his examination of l’Hospice des Quinze-Vingt, the institution founded in Paris by Louis IX in 1258, Wheatley (2002) argues that the church used physical blindness as evidence of sin, which was ministered to in order to imitate Christ’s role as aActor and healer.

During the European Enlightenment, blindness became fetishized in debates among both rationalists and sensualists. As in the Middle Ages, though, it was not really visual impairment itself that was central to the debates; rather, blindness became a form of “natural prosthesis” (Mitchell and Snyder 2000; Davidson 1994). Blindness aroused the thoughts of several Enlightenment philosophers because of an intellectual question posed by William Molyneux, a Dublin lawyer, in 1688. Molyneux asked whether a man who had actually learned to tell a globe with his fingers could be able, upon having his sight restored, immediately distinguish through vision one globe from the other. In later printings of An Essay on Human Understanding (1729), Locke answers Molyneux’s epistemological problem by arguing that the man would be incapable of distinguishing the one globe from the other. Inclusion of the query and Locke’s answer in Locke’s seminal text brought the hypothesis to the attention of eminent philosophers such as Berkeley, Condillac, Leibniz, and Voltaire, who took blindness as a mere intellectual puzzle that had no special value by itself. By contrast, it formed the inspiration for Diderot’s Letter on the Blind for the Use of Those Who Explored Blindness as a valuable subject unto itself.

Against a backdrop of emerging industrialization and modernization, blindness became not a rela