

Zeitschrift: SPELL : Swiss papers in English language and literature
Herausgeber: Swiss Association of University Teachers of English
Band: 30 (2014)

Artikel: Introduction
Autor: Langlotz, Andreas / Soltysik Monnet, Agnieszka
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-583876>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 30.12.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Introduction

It is a truism that we seek to express ideas, thoughts and attitudes through language and aesthetic forms of communication including fine art, film, theater, poetry and others. But then the behaviors and experiences that define our very existence cannot be captured in conceptual and rational terms alone. Rather it is another truism that we are thoroughly shaped and influenced by the powerful domain of emotion, affect, and sentiment. However, although nobody would deny the fundamental impact that emotionality has on our existence, until recently it has received much less scholarly and scientific attention than the cognitive and social dimensions of human life. This fact can probably be explained by a central phenomenological paradox surrounding emotions, affects, and sentiments. Despite their undeniable presence, they are fuzzy, evasive, and poorly graspable aspects of our experience. This pervasive and all-encompassing yet conceptually slippery force of emotionality is nicely reflected in Edvard Munch's painting *The Scream* (1893).

The image illustrates the potentially profound impact of emotion on an individual. The depicted persona screams with its mouth wide open and its hands covering the sides of its face, performing a gesture of emotional intensity. This emotional state, however, is not bound to the internal psychological world of the screamer nor is it reduced to its expression in the form of screaming. Rather the emotional experience is all encompassing, it blends with his/her environment as aesthetically represented through the swirls and curved lines – an ocean of affect – surrounding the protagonist; the whole context seems to be shaken with fear and/or pain. But despite being thoroughly emotional and affect-laden, the painting also demonstrates the highly evasive and conceptually inaccessible nature of affective experience. Due to the absence of sound in imagery, the audible force of the scream is merely alluded to vi-

sually. The same is true for the actual feeling of fear or pain. Phenomenologically, the feeling remains hidden to our immediate perceptual and conceptual grasp. It is metonymically represented and pointed to through aesthetic means of visual expression, yet we cannot perceive its essence, i.e. the very feeling of fear or anguish that the screamer is suffering from. Like the two figures in the background of the image, we cannot directly connect to the figure's emotional world. In fact, we cannot even know what kind of emotion the screamer is feeling; the painting has been interpreted variously as representing a scream of fear, anxiety, despair, or psychic anguish. If we examined any of these terms more closely, we would discover even more ambiguity and disagreement about what they mean to different people at different times and in different cultural spaces and scholarly disciplines. While being puzzling and inherently paradoxical, Munch's painting thus reveals emotionality to be a communicatively, culturally, and aesthetically represented, mediated as well as constructed phenomenon by its very nature. Rather than limiting the study of emotion, affect, and sentiment to the domain of psychology, this invites literary, historical, and linguistic approaches.

It is instructive to look at the different words we used in the title of this volume. Arguably, all are synonyms, yet each term comes not only with its own set of meanings (sometimes overlapping, sometimes opposed) and genealogies, but also with very different cultural baggage and implications. For example, the first, *emotion*, is perhaps the most neutral and wide-ranging of the four. Descended from Latin by means of the French *émouvoir*, the term evokes motion or agitation, a stirring up from a placid state. In this light, emotion is activity, energy, almost a synecdoche for life itself in its positive aspects, or a force of disruption and violence in its negative connotations. With the word *feeling*, important distinctions come creeping in. A Germanic word, *felen* in Middle English, *feeling* was and still is associated with the sense of touch, and by association, with perception. Thus, immediately, a contrast between a more active and passive understanding of the experience of being moved or feeling something emerges. In addition, some scholars would introduce a further distinction, locating feeling in subjective and individual experience, while allowing emotion a more conceptual and social definition, as "social and cultural practices" (Ahmed 9). Hence, scholarly attempts to schematize and theorize feelings have generally preferred to use the word *emotion*, as in Robert Plutchik's influential model of the "emotion wheel." The eminent American psychologist posited eight primary, universal and hard-wired human emotions: anger, fear, sadness,

disgust, surprise, anticipation, trust, and joy, organized neatly into opposed pairs (Plutchik 109).

One notable exception to this trend of associating feeling with individual experience would be Raymond Williams' notion of "structures of feeling," which has been highly influential as an attempt to articulate the relationship between personal and collective affective formations. Not simply an individual feeling or emotion, a structure of feeling is a "particular quality of social experience and relationship, historically distinct from other particular qualities, which gives the sense of a generation or of a period" (Williams, *Marxism and Literature* 131). As Sue Kim, author of *On Anger*, argues, Williams is not referring to what we think of as emotions, which are already named, defined and overdetermined, but to the "unnamed-while-lived set of experiences, feelings, thoughts, values, etc. – emergent or pre-emergent formations – that characterize a particular generation in a given historical moment" (61). As a Marxist critic, Williams was interested in how lived experience is shaped by yet exceeds existing social structures and formations, and he chose the word *feeling* in order to "emphasize a distinction from more formal concepts of 'world-view' or 'ideology'" (132). Yet Williams' use of the term also exceeds what we think of as feelings, encompassing "characteristic elements of impulse, restraint and tone [and] specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationships" (132). The conceptually tricky terrain between the individual and the social that Williams attempts to capture with the term structure of feeling brings us to a more recent attempt to navigate the liminal spaces between the personal and the public, and the subjective and the autonomous: affect.

The term that has most powerfully captured the scholarly energies of the new interest in emotionality has been *affect* itself. We hear of the "affective turn" in disciplines across the social, human and even so-called hard sciences. Part of a larger turning away from the linguistic turn in the humanities, though perhaps simply another turn of the screw, the affective turn has seen a revived interest in the biological sciences, evolutionary theory and even Darwinism, or more specifically, Darwin's *The Expressions of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. Along these lines, the affective turn has been particularly fueled by evidence revealing the fundamental connections between "lower-level" emotionality, "higher-level" rational thinking, and good judgment (e.g. Damasio, Goleman). In fact, in tandem with other questions raised by postmodernism and the notion of the posthuman, affect theory has been intensely interested in the boundaries between the human and nonhuman, including human and animal, and human and cybernetic. Yet, even the term "affect the-

ory” has not emerged from a single coherent set of foundational ideas or texts. On the contrary, there are at least two distinct vectors of theoretical force in affect theory, one based on interest in affect as innate and biological, derived from Silvan Tomkins’ work and exemplified in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank’s 1995 essay, “Shame in the Cybernetic Fold,” and another tendency based rather on Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, such as Brian Massumi’s “The Autonomy of Affect” (also 1995).¹ Yet both share an insistence on distinguishing affect from emotion, identifying the latter as socially and linguistically (over)-determined, and defining affect instead as pre-linguistic and pre-conscious “forces or intensities . . . that circulate about, between, and sometimes stick to bodies and worlds” (Seigworth and Gregg 1). Theorists of affect like Brian Massumi or Lauren Berlant use the term to explore the complex resonances and encounters between bodies, subjects, and the social and physical world they live in, but this line of inquiry tends to pass over individual subjects and favor a depersonalized approach that often takes the political for its object instead. Thus, one of Massumi’s best known essays, “The Future Birth of the Affective Fact,” is about the manipulation of a sense of threat by the Bush administration, while Berlant’s work consistently revisits a nexus of concepts including citizenship, sexuality, the public sphere, and national belonging. In short, although the affective turn is a wide constellation of developments, and the word *affect*, a Latinate word that derives from *afficere* (“to act upon, influence, affect, attack with disease”), means different things to different scholars, there is a tendency – which resonates well with the etymological root of the word, which assumes an external source – to use affect to discuss the experience of embodied cognition in the world.

This brings us to the final word of the title, *sentiment*, a word that may seem very old-fashioned compared to the currently sexy *affect*, but which may serve to remind us that even intellectual turns have a history. Long before affect emerged to help us think about embodied cognition, sentiment had been doing exactly that for nearly two centuries (as had the Aristotelian notion of *catharsis* well before that). A cognate of the Latin *sentire* (to feel), and derived from the French *sentement* (personal experience or feeling), *sentiment* became entangled in the eighteenth century with the words *sympathy* and *sensibility*. Francis Hutcheson and Adam Smith found in sentiment not only a theory of individual benevolence

¹ Social psychologist Paul Stenner identifies *three*, adding also the resurgence of psychoanalytical ideas in the social sciences, such as Ian Craib’s “Social Construction as a Social Psychosis” (Stenner 8).

and compassion, but a basis for thinking about the social order. Questions of ethics and epistemology were closely tied to sentiment, and issues of cultural relativism versus human universalism were often channeled through discussions of sentiments and emotions (e.g. the David Hume/Immanuel Kant split in moral philosophy). Issues of aesthetics became vitally and essentially imbricated with the question of emotion, judgment and the grounds for collective life. In literature and the arts, sentimentalism reigned as a dominant mode for much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and endures in the continuing importance of melodrama as a narrative form (as Linda Williams has argued).

Modernism imposed an important break on the sentimental culture of the nineteenth century, both in the USA and UK and across Europe, looking back to Romantic notions (specifically from Kant) such as the “sublime” and the “transcendental,” investing art with a kind of secular sacred force, and developing quasi-religious aesthetic concepts such as the epiphany (a term with a long Christian genealogy). In reaction to the highly emotionalized reception of art in the nineteenth century, modernist criticism tended to strive for a disinterested and more scientific or universalist attitude, hence the banishment of emotion from reading by the New Critics with the Affective Fallacy. It was not until feminism and postcolonial theory began to dismantle the modernist canon and its aesthetic value system that it was possible to look at the cultural work of emotion and sensation seriously again. This was done in the 1970s by critics such as Peter Brooks, Thomas Elsaesser, and Jane Tompkins, among many others. Thus, work on melodrama and sentimental culture in the fields of American Studies, film theory, theater history, and literature all paved the way for the current surge of interest in affect and emotion across the disciplines.

In April 2013, the English Department at the University of Lausanne hosted the biennial SAUTE conference to engage with this complex domain of emotionality and to scrutinize the general question of how affect, emotion, sentiment are related to language and aesthetics. It invited researchers in English and American literature, medieval studies, and linguistics to exchange new ideas, test innovative approaches, and analyze a multitude of texts and linguistic data. Since investigations into human emotionality ask for interdisciplinary contact between disciplines from the humanities and cognitive sciences and in light of the recent interest on the part of literature, medievalist, and linguistic scholars in cross-disciplinary inquiry, we also invited Paul Stenner, Professor of Social Psychology at the Open University in the UK, to give a keynote lecture on the “affective turn” as viewed from his field of research. The

presentation focused on a particularly interesting aspect of affect theory, namely, *liminality*. In *The Affect Theory Reader*, Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth propose that affect is “born in *in-between-ness* and resides as accumulative *beside-ness*” (2, italics in original). Stenner drew on anthropologist Victor Turner’s work on rites of passage and the philosopher A. N. Whitehead’s theory of experience to argue that affect is literally a liminal state, and therefore a phenomenon of transition. Observing that whereas traditional societies had carefully structured rites of passage and modern societies have few or none, Stenner proposed that the result is a tendency toward “permanent liminality.” Following Victor Turner’s claim that some of the features of traditional liminal situations have been taken over by “liminoid experiences associated with theater and art,” Stenner explored the possible connections between contemporary art, the “affective turn,” and the “conditions for an experiential confrontation with what it means to be a human being” that are created by liminality and a suspension of conventional structures. He ended his keynote lecture by pointing out that many of the positive qualities attributed to liminality by Turner resemble the way in which affect is currently celebrated by writers of the affective turn: as an event rather than a state or structure, as a potency or potential that can disrupt existing structures, as about community rather than society, etc. (see also Stenner and Moreno-Gabriel, “Liminality and affectivity” 13). The keynote was well received and several delegates incorporated Stenner’s reflections into their contributions to this volume. Thus, interdisciplinary from the start, the conference covered a wide range of approaches and touched on issues such as the affective turn in literature, Romantic and Modernist aesthetics, the history of emotions, melodrama and the Gothic, reception aesthetics, attitudes, impoliteness, and medicine. The present volume comprises a selection of the best papers presented at the conference.

Literature

The first essay, Nancy Armstrong’s “When Sympathy Fails: The Affective Turn in Contemporary Fiction,” makes a boldly historical argument, taking as a point of departure the recent trend of fictional protagonists – such as Ishiguro’s Kathy in *Never Let Me Go* – who resist or refuse the sympathetic identification traditionally produced and managed by the novel. Instead of ascribing this emergence to a recent historical event, however, Armstrong proposes that we consider the new forms of affect

that emerged in the nineteenth century as life was re-defined by Darwin. Armstrong thus engages with the recent affect theorists' interest in the relationship between science and cultural formations, navigating deftly between Jane Austen, Franz Kafka and a range of contemporary writers to show that affect remains at the heart of the English novel, but in a radically new configuration. In this new formation, the novel transforms inhospitable places, such as those the protagonists inhabit, into liminal sites that allow these protagonists to survive their deaths as individuals or integrated identities and to experience new forms of self. With this provocative argument, Nancy Armstrong revisits the ideas that form her most influential work – such as the notion of the novel as a disciplinary institution – and reflects on the consequences for that argument of the most recent trends in contemporary fiction.

The next literature essay (the fifth essay in the volume) takes us into the heart of sentimental culture in the eighteenth century. In “The Affectionate Author: Family Love as Rhetorical Device in Eighteenth-Century Conduct Books for Young Women,” Erzsi Kukorelly examines women's conduct guides to see how affection is deployed rhetorically as a disciplinary technique. Focusing on how young women are enjoined to comply with the conduct rules laid down in the texts in exchange for the love and affection of their elders, the author argues that eighteenth-century conduct books transform feelings of love into exchangeable commodities: parental love into advice, and filial love into good conduct. In contrast, Enit Steiner's “Exuberant Energies: Affect in *Vathek*, *Zofloya* and *The Giaour*” examines the darker side of eighteenth century sentimental culture, namely, Gothic fiction, and specifically the Orientalized Gothic. Like Kukorelly, Steiner focuses on the political and social dimensions of the representation of emotion, but looks at texts that stage a “vehement defiance” of eighteenth century family and institutions, plunging readers into stories of emotional excess, violence and perversion. If conduct books propagated compliance and discipline through affection, the Orientalized Gothic novel represented a site of resistance to the “domestic realism” and sentimental values that dominated British literature of this period.

The next two papers can also be viewed as companion pieces, even if dealing with rather different periods and texts. Sangam MacDuff's “Joyce's Transcendental Aesthetics of Epiphany” and Francesca de Lucia's “Awe, Terror and Mathematics in Don DeLillo's *Ratner's Star*” both examine the aesthetics of the transcendental and sublime that Modernism inherited from Romanticism. MacDuff argues that the literary epiphany, as conceived by Joyce in *Stephen Hero*, is not a wholly secular

or subjective experience, but is informed by a Romantic aesthetics of transcendence. Joyce's modernist text is thus deeply indebted to Kant's theory of the sublime, while reimagining that sublimity not in moral law or nature but in language. De Lucia also argues that Don DeLillo's *Ratner's Star* draws on Romantic ideas about sublimity and specifically about the feeling of awe, but locates these in mathematics and scientific research rather than language. Drawing on Robert Plutchik's theory of emotions, Mary Jane Rubenstein's analyses of awe, as well as Kantian notions of the sublime, de Lucia explores the ambivalent emotions linked to modern experiences of the sublime, ranging from fear and paranoia to awe and sensations of redemption.

Medieval Studies

While giving the impression of a timeless motive, Munch's *The Scream* is a modernist painting emerging at a historical period when the relationship between the individual, nature, and society became radically redefined, with humans encountering themselves encaged in increasingly impersonal, bureaucratic and aggressive political machineries, denaturalized and increasingly technologized urban societies, and secularized psychological spaces of introverted self-reflexivity. Accordingly, the painting can be read as the emotional outcry of the modern individual who feels estranged, distorted, and diseased by the environment he/she finds him/herself in. Congruent with this interpretation, the Foucauldian notion that emotions and sentiments have a history has inspired a growing body of scholarly works that conceive "emotions as habits that can be produced through cultural scripts" (McNamer). The medieval period provides fertile ground for a study of social and cultural changes in emotional behavior. The present volume contains two contributions written by medievalists who engage with the question of how historical context influences and shapes the very idea of emotionality and how it patterns habits of affective engagement.

Stephanie Trigg's essay is centrally interested in the history of feeling. But rather than exploring a traditional medievalist topic, she focuses on the emotional reception of Chaucer by the romanticist Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Coleridge's affective experience when reading the most famous English medieval poet provides a scholarly test ground for Trigg to discuss how emotional stances towards literary works are subject to historical change and how such shifts can be read as reflections of the particular emotional habits of receptive textual communities. The essay

thus establishes an interesting dialogue between the fields of literary reception – Chaucer reception in particular – histories of feeling, and the changing emotional orientations of literary criticism. In line with Reddy's concept of the "emotional utterance" (Reddy 104-105) that is employed by Trigg, literary criticism at different historical periods can be said to produce different types of emotive utterances about literary works, which are reflexive of the emotional habits adopted by the literary critics at a given point in time. Along these lines, our own reading of Munch's *The Scream* can be seen as an emotive utterance that probably unveils the analytical and emotionally-distanced orientation of present-day academic discourse in the humanities.

Daniel McCann's paper can also be associated with Munch's painting as it pulls us into the medieval conceptualization of fear. More specifically, the author discusses the two opposed appraisals of this emotion in medieval medicine and medieval theology. While the former rather seems to tie in with present-day classifications of fear as a negative emotion, the latter regards it as a suitable means to enhance the health of the soul and to prepare it for the union with God. These positive conceptions of fear are revealed through a close reading of Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*. McCann's paper is also highly interesting from a contemporary perspective on emotion theory because it shows that competing theories of emotions – even of basic emotions such as fear – have a long tradition in Western thought. In addition, the essay reveals how such theories are closely connected to the ideological frameworks (medicine versus theology) in which they are embedded.

Linguistics

Human beings are not able to interact with one another, let alone communicate or learn a language, without showing a fundamental, if not innate, sense of empathy (Malloch and Trevarthen). But although human language and emotionality seem to be fundamentally intertwined, the complex connections between language and emotion have yet to be systematically explored in (English) linguistics (Foolen et al., Wilce). In this volume four innovative essays contribute highly interesting substance to fill this research lacuna. They address the role of emotions and affect in impolite language use, compare the use of expletives in Irish and British English, discuss the cultural relativity of emotional language and emotion concepts, scrutinize the meta-communicative reflections on emotional experiences by medical students, and test the emotional

stances towards different Varieties of English as conveyed through the attitudes of Swiss students of English.

The essay presented by Culpeper, Schauer, Marti, Mei and Nevala takes us to the heart of emotional experience in language use. Focusing on how impoliteness affects interlocutors, the study pursues the more particular research question of which feelings members from different cultural backgrounds (England, Finland, Germany, Turkey and China) refer to when reporting on impolite speech events that they found themselves in. The article thus engages with the central question of how language use is sanctioned through an underlying emotional substrate that is of fundamental importance to distinguish between polite or impolite utterances. Empirically, the paper reveals parallels between the different cultures with regard to more general, higher-level emotion categories, but it also points to salient differences on the lower level of more specific emotional subcategories such as sadness. Thus, there seem to be both general and culture-specific trends in managing (im)politeness emotionally. Along these lines, the paper pulls us into the long-standing debate concerning the universality versus cultural-relativity of emotional experience. Theoretically, the study develops a convincing argument for including a cognitive dimension of appraisal that links the use of impolite language to (moral) judgments of inappropriateness which then trigger corresponding emotional reactions. This cognitive layer of evaluating speech events is bound to conceptions of norm through the notion of “sociality rights” as well as personal integrity through the concept of “face.” The paper thus opens a window into the complex nexus between the emotional, cognitive, social, and linguistic components underlying linguistic interaction. To build an interpretative link between this essay and Munch’s *The Scream*, we could see the screamer’s emotional reaction as his/her judgment of the unacceptable social-interactional environment that he/she finds herself in. Following the logic of the paper, however, screamers from different cultures would react to this environment differently, not all of them would scream necessarily or scream as loudly as the others.

An alternative cross-cultural perspective on emotionality in language use is offered by Patricia Ronan. In her essay, she scrutinizes the use of religious expressions such as *Jesus!* or *My God!* and body-related swear-words as in *Fuck!* These expletives are used in English to signal the high emotional involvement of the speaker. With regard to *The Scream* they could thus be directly connected to what the screamer shouts out in reaction to his/her feeling state. Anchoring her study in the pragmatic classification of speech acts, most importantly expressives, the author is

centrally interested in comparing the use of religious and *f*-word expletives in Irish and British English. This comparison is highly interesting because it provides scientific ground for investigating cultural differences in emotional expression between different varieties of a given language rather than between different languages alone. Along these lines, the study manages to bring variational pragmatics into contact with the ethnolinguistic study of emotion words. Ronan yields her results by employing a corpus-linguistic method, which allows her to compare quantitatively the occurrence of religious oaths and swearwords in the ICE Ireland and ICE Great Britain corpora. And indeed, the study reveals interesting differences in the (relatively rare) use of expletives in the two cultures, which point to culture-specific preferences of evoking religious and body-related connotations for communicating the emotional force of an utterance.

Varieties of English are also put on center stage by Sarah Chevalier. But rather than analyzing the linguistic communication of emotionality through these varieties, she focuses on the emotional stances that language users adopt towards them. The study thus approaches the nexus between language and emotion from the perspective of language attitudes. In particular, the author is interested in the attitudes held by Swiss students. But why Swiss students rather than native speakers of English? Chevalier takes the Swiss context as a test ground to find out whether the increasing importance and the increasingly positive evaluation of regional varieties of English by native speakers are also reflected in the emotional stances adopted by the students in Switzerland. This research question is pertinent since the increasing accessibility of different varieties of English to Swiss students through media channels and their high degree of mobility is likely to cause a greater exposure to “Englishes” rather than the traditional variety of standard British English formerly taught at schools. The study reveals that the students’ affective relationship to different types of English is dynamically shifting indeed. This is highly interesting because macro-sociolinguistic developments in the English-speaking world also seem to leave their traces in the private emotional landscapes of non-native speakers of the language. The essay thus provides an important insight into the relationship between changing linguistic norms and their attitudinal substrates in an increasingly globalized world. In line with the aesthetics of *The Scream* it captures the dynamic and fluid interrelation between the external and the internal dimensions of affect.

Miriam Locher and Regula Koenig explore links between language and emotional experiences on the meta-communicative level of health

discourse. By analyzing the content of written reports of British medical students, they investigate how the future doctors reflect on their communicative experiences when interacting with patients as part of their training. Locher and Koenig show emotion, affect, and sentiment to be one central theme highlighted by the students. Accordingly, the authors describe the range of emotion words used by the students and point to the variety of nonverbal cues that are described by them when giving their accounts of or when re-enacting the emotional experiences they felt when engaging with the patients. They are moved by the interlocutors' medical histories, by difficult cases, and by the patients' reactions within doctor-patient talk. In addition, they sometimes feel uneasy when it comes to communicating their own affective states within these encounters. Locher and Koenig's study can thus be nicely related to the *The Scream*. Like the screamer medical students often find themselves in emotionally charged or stirred up social environments. Probably, their spontaneous affective reactions would cause them to scream and express their empathy with the patients. However, the students have to learn to manage their emotional engagement with their interactors. Rather than screaming loudly, they have to adopt a controlled and somewhat detached position similar to the two figures in the background of Munch's painting. In this vein, this essay is fundamentally connected to the question of what forms of emotional expression and emotional "language" are supported and sanctioned by a given socio-cultural context and which ones are regarded as dispreferred or unacceptable.

Media

The final essay brings us back to theories of melodrama but in the context of contemporary popular culture. Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet's "Political Emotions: Civil Religion and Melodrama in Spielberg's *Lincoln*" examines Steven Spielberg's recent biographical film about Abraham Lincoln in order to show how it weaves together melodrama and elements of civil religion to create a potent experience of national mythopoesis. Thus, like many of the other essays on literature in the volume, Soltysik Monnet's argument engages with the political and cultural uses of affect, examining how the cinematic choreography of affect can serve complex ideological interests. In keeping with the interdisciplinary spirit of the volume, the author offers a textual and dramaturgical reading of the film but also draws on sociology for tools to think about the inter-

play between emotions and national symbols such as Abraham Lincoln. More to the point, Soltysik Monnet demonstrates how melodrama, and its conventionalized staging of sympathetic identification for a virtuous victim-hero, remains one of the most important narrative modes in American popular culture. In a sense, this is not surprising, considering the importance that suffering has come to have in twentieth-century definitions of individual and collective identity. Collective victimhood has served as a key element in political formations, and individual trauma has assumed the role in discourses of subject-formation that sexuality once had. It is no coincidence then that *The Scream* is sometimes referred to as “the modern Mona Lisa.” If La Gioconda’s enigmatic smile, so full of possibilities as well as self-satisfaction, is the defining image of the European Renaissance, then what more fitting as an icon for modernity than Munch’s anguished screamer?

*

As can be seen from this first glance at the essays in this volume, the evolving field of emotion, affect and sentiment provides an array of fascinating phenomena to be approached from a variety of perspectives offered by English and American literature, medieval studies and English linguistics. The field is ripe with new ideas, readings, and methods and we are proud to present some of this innovation in this volume. Therefore, we cordially invite the readers to join in the academic debates initiated at the SAUTE conference and to embark on the emotional, affective, and sentimental journeys that have led to this book.

Andreas Langlotz and Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet

References

- Ahmed, Sarah. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Berlant, Lauren. "The Subject of True Feeling: Pain, Privacy and Politics." *Cultural and Political Theory*. Ed. Jean Dodi. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000. 42-62.
- , ed. *Compassion: The Culture and Politics of an Emotion*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Brooks, Peter. *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.
- Clough, Patricia T. and Jean Halley, eds. *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Craib, Ian. "Social Construction as a Social Psychosis." *Sociology* 31.1 (1997): 1-15.
- Damasio, Antonio. *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*. London: Penguin, 1994.
- Darwin, Charles. "The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals" (1872). *From So Simple A Beginning: The Four Great Books of Charles Darwin*. Ed. Edward O. Wilson. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2006. 1255-1478.
- Elsaesser, Thomas. "Tales of Sound and Fury." *Imitations of Life: Explorations of Melodrama*. Ed. M. Landis. Ohio: Wayne State University Press, 1991. 44-79.
- Foolen, Ad, Ulrike M. Lüdtke, Timothy P. Racine, and Jordan Zlatev, eds. *Moving Ourselves, Moving Others: Motion and Emotion in Intersubjectivity, Consciousness and Language*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2012.
- Goleman, Daniel. *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ*. New York: Bantam Books, 1995.
- Gregg, Melissa, and Gregory J. Seigworth, eds. *The Affect Theory Reader*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Kim, Sue. *On Anger: Race, Cognition, Narrative*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013.
- Malloch, Stephen, and Colwyn Trevarthen. *Communicative Musicality. Exploring the Basis of Human Companionship*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Massumi, Brian. "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact: The Political Ontology of Threat." *The Affect Theory Reader*. Eds. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010. 52-70.

- . “The Autonomy of Affect.” *Cultural Critique* 31 (September 1995): 83-110.
- McNamer, Sarah. *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.
- Plutchik, Robert. *The Emotions*. Boston: University of America Press, 1991.
- Reddy, William. *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, and Adam Frank. “Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins. *Shame and Its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader*. Eds. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995. 1-28.
- Seigworth, Gregory J., and Melissa Gregg. “An Inventory of Shimmers.” *The Affect Theory Reader*. Eds. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010. 1-25.
- Stenner, Paul. “On Liminal Feelings and Feeling Liminal: A Psychosocial Rethinking of the ‘Turn to Affect.’” Paper presented at the University of Lausanne, April 2013.
- and Eduard Moreno-Gabriel. “Liminality and affectivity: The case of deceased organ donation.” *Subjectivity* 6.3 (2013): 229–253.
- Tompkins, Jane. *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Wilce, James M. *Language and Emotion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Williams, Linda. *Playing the Race Card: Melodramas of Black and White from Uncle Tom’s Cabin to O. J. Simpson*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.