

EDITORIAL **en-**

Thinking about Affect in Culture and Art

In what has undoubtedly become one of the most frequently quoted phrases concerning affect, Baruch Spinoza maintained, “No one has yet determined what the body can do.” Although the notion of affect—which can often encompass a variety of concepts such as passions, moods, sensations, feelings and emotions—has been a recurrent theme throughout the history of philosophy, recently we have witnessed an increased proliferation of academic publications focused on the role of affect in cultural theory—especially the conceptualization of affect that draws on the line of thought from Gilles Deleuze back through Spinoza—which indicates what Patricia Clough dubs an “affective turn” in the humanities and social sciences. Since the publication of two essays in 1995, one by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank (“Shame in the Cybernetic Fold”) and one by Brian Massumi (“The Autonomy of Affect”), the concept of affect has spread throughout a wide range of disciplines, generating a rich constellation of perspectives in areas such as ontology, ethics, aesthetics and politics.

The #14 issue of *452°F* draws on this renewed interest raised by affect studies, particularly as it has been developed in the Anglo-Saxon world in the last two decades. More specifically, the aim of this monograph is to examine the implications of the affective turn in literary and cultural studies: What does it mean to reflect on the affective in cultural texts? What conceptual challenges does this approach raise as it is deployed by diverse theoretical perspectives?

The articles in this issue respond to these questions from diverse theoretical perspectives and geographical and linguistic contexts, addressing a variety of cultural productions emanating from philosophy, literature, music, visual arts and cinema, as well as staging contemporary debates on the role of affective experience in literary creation and reception; the distinction between affect and emotion; historical and conceptual relations between philosophies of emotion and literary experience; gender and critical race studies, as well as reflections on community, all of which use affect theory as a primary critical tool. There is no single theory of affect. There are numerous contemporary permutations and various frictions between proponents of

the affective turn; these frictions are also present in this issue.

The monograph opens with an invited piece by Libe García Zarranz, “Joyful Insurrection as Feminist Methodology; or The Joys of Being a Feminist Killjoy,” which highlights the intimate relation between the “affective turn” and feminist and decolonial studies. Building on Spinoza’s vitalist philosophy, together with Sara Ahmed’s feminist anti-racist theories, García Zarranz offers a new feminist methodology, based not on the politics of the negative, but rather on what the author dubs, drawing on Rosi Braidotti, “an ethics of joyful insurrection.” The article reconsiders the figure of the *feminist killjoy* in conjunction with the affect of joy (*laetitia*), in Spinozian terms, mapping the potential connections and diffractions between these seemingly contradictory terms. Her analysis of KC Adams’ photo series *Perception* (2014) as a complex affective space brings to light the possible political and ethical dimensions of the joyful dissent postulated by the author.

Jack Dudley’s “Is the Body an Immanent Domain? On Postsecular Affects,” offers a counterpoint to the materialist basis of affect theory, predominant in queer theory, feminist studies and critical race theory, which according to Dudley “have often required a secular mindset, given religious histories of oppression and exclusion.” In his approach to the intersection of secularism and affect theory—through the Deleuzian route represented by Massumi and Clough—the author examines the critical possibilities of considering bodies and affects beyond a materialist ontology, offering a reflection on postsecular affects. According to the author, while critical theory has ignored the possibility of thinking affect along with postsecularism, literature—in particular the contemporary novel—proves to be a productive site for imagining new ways of being and feeling in the world.

The next two contributions, “*Ter saudade até que é bom. Música y afectividad en dos documentales brasileños recientes*,” by Irene Depetris Chauvin, and “*Restos de vida. Estéticas de la supervivencia y políticas afectivas de lo común en Rafael Pinedo y Carlos Ríos*,” by Cecilia Sánchez Idiart, shift the reflection on affect to the Latin American continent, an important context of reception of affect theories. Drawing on theorization of music of cultural studies, and Brian Massumi’s distinction between emotion, as a visualization of feeling that responds to historical-cultural regulation, and affect, as a non-conscious experience which “cannot be fully contained within discourses or modes of communication organized around meaning,” Depetris Chauvin offers an evocative analysis of *Vou Rifar Meu Coração* (2011), by Ana Rieper, and *As Canções* (2011), by Eduardo Coutinho, mapping out new ways of thinking about the links between music and affectivity. Sánchez Idiart, in turn, examines two Argentinian novels, *Plop* (2004) by Rafael Pinedo and *Manigua* (2009) by Carlos Ríos, looking into the politic dimension of affect, conceptualized here as that which occurs to the body, as well as that which always arises between bodies. By framing her own analysis within a series of critical works that interrogate contemporary aesthetic practices in Latin America and that focus on the configurations of common life, Sánchez Idiart’s piece offers a productive encounter between thinking about community and the notion of affectivity as a mobile threshold of the composition and the disaggregation of bodies (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010), associated here with “an interrogation of the differential and relational materiality of the living which dismantles the hierarchies established by the biopower, between human and animal, organic and non-organic.”

The implications of the affective turn in literary theory are also the object of analysis in “El afecto como antídoto contra la privatización y despolitización de la memoria” by Anthony Nuckols, who examines Ernesto Pérez Zúñiga’s *Santo Diablo* (2004) and Juan Mayorga’s *El cartógrafo: Varsovia (1:400.000)* (2010).

This article illustrates another important route in affect studies, which addresses the affective nature of memory and the corporal transmission of trauma. Building on the Spinozian notion of affect, as well as on more recent contributions, Nuckols correlates the affective, just like Sánchez Idiart does, with a revolutionary potentiality, capable of producing alternative modalities of association and links between bodies—between the bodies of the protagonists, who are involved in the suffering of others within the narrative time, and between the reader's body and the "body" of the novel. The author concludes that the act of reading can blur the old, temporal, generational and geographical delimitations and thus not only bring attention to existing connections and associations, but also generate them.

In "De la fotografía y su capacidad afeptiva" Núria Calafell Sala draws on literary theory to explore some of the artistic representations of childbirth that circulate in social media. The concept of afept ("afepto")—a neologism coined by Manuel Asensi, which attempts to bring together the conceptual and the affective—permits an interrogation of the common confrontation between ideas and affects or sensations, as well as offering a broader consideration of the political-ethical dimension of art and new ways of thinking about affect.

Paul Michael Johnson's article, "Of Fine Arts and Fine Feelings: Mapping Affect across Lessing's *Laocoön*, Lord Carteret's *Quijote*, and Oldfield's 'Advertencias,'" also addresses visual culture, in particular, the illustrations included in an eighteenth-century British edition of Cervantes's *Don Quijote*. In his comparative study, Johnson shows how these images, along with a brief theoretical text by John Oldfield, can be considered through the lens of affect—here a synonym for emotions—producing an innovative reading of Cervantes's novel: a reading focused on the visuality, corporeality, and materiality of narrative. In general terms, the article raises questions about how the painting-versus-poetry debate and tradition of *ut pictura poesis* may enhance our understanding of affect in arts and culture, concluding that it is affect itself which seems to destabilize the old correspondences between the two arts.

Johnson's article illustrates that, although studies on literary emotions have been frequently associated with the notion of "sentimentalism," affect and emotions have always played an important role not only in the development of aesthetics and literary criticism, but also in conceptual questions that attend to the very foundations of what Plato and Aristotle considered to be the arts of mimetic representation. This idea is made evident in the text by Felipe Lima da Silva, "Dos efeitos da metáfora no domínio das paixões: (re)visão de Aristóteles no seiscentos," which concludes this monograph. Drawing on Aristotelian rhetoric Lima da Silva examines a series of metaphors deployed in "Sermão da Sexagésima," a sermon preached in 1655 by Father Antonio Vieira, designed to *move* the affects of the audience through images. According to the author, the metaphors configured in the sermon appeal to the order of sensations, engaging the listeners' bodies. Ultimately, the articles comprising this issue think about cultural texts beyond representation, making us attentive not only to what texts mean, but also to how they affect us.

The miscellany section includes four papers. In "Entre *Contorno* y *Los libros*, los críticos universitarios en *Setecientosmonos*," Judith Podlubne offers a contextualized analysis of contributions by a group of young critics to the magazine *Setecientosmonos* in the mid-1960s. This analysis allows for a clarification of the conditions which enabled the emergence of the so called "new criticism" in Argentina. Alberto Giordano, in turn, examines in "El discurso sobre el ensayo en la cultura argentina desde mediados de los '80" different orders involved in the process of the institutionalization of the ethos of the so called "discurso sobre el

ensayo en la cultura argentina desde mediados de los '80" different orders involved in the process of the institutionalization of the ethos of the so called "discurso sobre el ensayo" ("discourse on essays"), such as the edition of dossiers in cultural magazines, the establishment of journals devoted to essays, the publication of monographs, and the organization of colloquia and international symposia on the politics and rhetoric of critical essays. In "Triángulos narrativos. Aproximaciones a la combinatoria de géneros en novela contemporánea," Sergio Vidal considers the notion of "narrative triangles" through the study of *Anatomía de un instante*, by Javier Cercas, and *HHhH*, by Laurent Binet, demonstrating how contemporary writers are creating a specific type of novel through the combination of different narrative genres. Finally, in "El canon fílmico a la luz de las teorías sistémicas: una propuesta metodológica," Mario de la Torre Espinosa draws on polysystems theory, and in particular on the notion of intersystemic interference, to develop a new approach to the process of canonization in film history.

The issue is completed by three reviews that participate in the growing interest in the affect studies. Erin Wunker reviews Adam Frank's recent publication, *Transferential Poetics, from Poe to Warhol*, which presents a method for bringing theories of affect to the study of poetics. Dolores Resano comments on *Queering Acts of Mourning in the Aftermath of Argentina's Dictatorship: The Performances of Blood* by Cecilia Sosa, an examination of the aftermath of Argentina's last dictatorship (1976-1983) from queer theory and affect studies perspectives, which offers a new framework for understanding the affective transmission of trauma. The issue concludes with the review written by Iggy Cortez of Weihong Bao's *Fiery Cinema: The Emergence of an Affective Medium in China, 1915-1945*, a book that innovatively combines research into the history of cinema in early 20th century China with theorizations on reception, spectatorship, affect theory, and media genealogy.

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