

Preface

After a long period of neglect, emotions have become an important topic in literary studies, although literature is not the only field of interest when dealing with the question of emotion. Within the humanities, disciplines such as film studies, history, anthropology and philosophy have made influential contributions, while in the realm of the natural and social sciences the topic of emotions has been widely discussed in neurology, biology, sociology and psychology. This considerable involvement of such a great variety of disciplines led to the assumption of an “emotional turn” (Anz 2006). But one could also pose the challenging question of whether it is appropriate to speak rather of an “affective (re)turn” (Keen 2011), given the fact that emotions have been a topic in philosophy and the arts since antiquity. Emotions were, for example, also broadly treated in the discourses on affect and passion in the 16th and 17th century, in the 18th century’s aesthetic of sentiment or, with the concept of empathy (*Einfühlung*), in the 19th and early 20th century.

These observations provided the starting point for this volume and the international conference preceding it. The symposium “Writing Emotions. Literature as Practice (19th to 21st Century)” was held at the University of Graz from 18 to 20 May 2016. It was organized by the Center for Cultural Studies and the doctoral programme “Culture – Text – Act(ion)” at the University of Graz in cooperation with the European PhDnet “Literary and Cultural Studies”. International PhD students, postdoc researchers and senior researchers from various disciplines, such as English and American Studies, German Studies, Slavic Studies and Comparative Literature, came together to present and discuss their newest findings and theoretical models concerning emotions and literature, with a special focus on the practice of writing. In their papers, they drew on theoretical concepts and studies from fields such as philosophy and cognitive studies and transferred these to cultural and literary analyses. The conference opened up an interdisciplinary dialogue to pose questions and formulate theoretical models from which the various disciplines could then profit in turn.

The central questions addressed at the conference as well as in the contributions in this volume are the following:

- Which roles do emotions play within writing as an aesthetic process?
- Where and how do emotional moments of the practice of writing leave traces within the text?
- How do authors play with this emotional impact?
- Where and how do authors explicitly deal with emotion and writing or with writing as an emotional practice within the texts?
- What kind of role do intermedial strategies play?
- Where does intertextuality come in?
- How is the topic and context of media devices incorporated (language, writing tools, photography, film, the digital etc.)?
- What theoretical models do we have for analysing forms of emotion in modern literature?
- What are the interfaces and borders between sociocultural and scientific concepts of emotion and aesthetic emotions in the context of writing as agency?
- Which types of emotion and which forms of literary emotions can be found in the context of writing as agency?

The contributions, grouped into four thematic sections, ponder these questions and their implications.

The first section is conceived as a theoretical introduction. In her programmatic proposal, Susanne Knaller presents the interconnections between emotions and the process of writing, summing up the core questions of the volume and establishing a theoretical basis for it. Drawing on recent scholarship on emotions and literature, she particularly highlights the complex role of literature/written texts as both the result of and the trigger for emotional patterns and as potentially enforcing and/or challenging norms. Based on these considerations, she proposes a number of relevant and previously neglected fields and questions for further research on the issue of writing as a process and its relations to the field of emotions. Vera Nünning then addresses emotions encoded in literature and their effect on the reader. Using extensive textual examples from various periods and genres, she gives a wide-ranging overview of strategies of emotional expression in world literature, relating the results of her text-immanent and reception-focused analysis to neuroscientific findings. Gesine Lenore Schiewer chooses an original empiric approach to the topic. In an interview with writer Michael Stavarič, she discusses the core questions of this volume exemplarily, thereby

providing a concrete and illustrative case study. With cognitive psychology and artificial intelligence as her point of departure, she draws on the theoretical and practical knowledge of the possibilities and limitations of technological processes to explore the interface between feeling, artificially generated emotional expression and the question of its authenticity. Finally, Angela Locatelli explores psychoanalytic discourses around religious feelings of ecstasy, thus highlighting another dimension of the spectrum of human emotions, and discusses them in a systematically comparative way. Aspects of depth-psychological views, central for the study of emotions, are thus made fruitful for theoretical deliberations, laying the groundwork for further studies.

The ensuing sections present contributions and analyses on the themes of “Emotions Mediated”, “Emotions on Stage and in Literary Texts” and “Writing Wounds”.

The contributions to “Emotions Mediated” address possible reciprocal effects between emotions and various media. Specific media such as letters (Marie Dürker), diaries (Julia Grillmayr), journalistic and artistic texts (Ingeborg Jandl), internet posts and YouTube videos (Silke Jandl), bodies, and vehicles (Nora Berning), as well as musical and artistic works in a broader sense, are analysed in regard to their potential for emotional expression. Discussions of these examples consider to what extent medial forms mediate or facilitate the expression of emotions, to what extent emotions are altered through these means of expression, and what implications different medial forms can have for emotional self-images and the image of others. Media imply specific discourses, sign systems and practices, and emotional expression necessitates the translation of emotion into these systems. The contributions to this section highlight potential obstacles to this undertaking. These impediments can stem both from a subject’s uncertain emotional state and from the process of textualization and the difficulties inherent in translating feelings into a medium in order to make them accessible to others. Discussions and examples illustrate the complexity of emotions and offer suggestions for dealing with the potentially fraught issue of mediated emotions. The essays in this section show that writing, as an ‘external movement’, initiates and triggers internal as well as further external movements and consequently accompanies the construction of identities and personalities.

The essays in the section “Emotions on Stage and in Literary Texts” point out techniques of inscribing emotions into written and spoken or performed texts, often with the explicit goal of directly affecting the recipients. The shifts and modifications of the concept of emotions become particularly apparent in the

two essays discussing early modern texts by Gudrun Tockner and Emanuel Stelzer, which highlight the categories of humorism as important tenets of contemporaneous anthropological thought while also discussing other, less well-known emotional categories of the time. Dialogue and stage directions from early modern plays illustrate that emotional frame settings and rhetorical means are carefully chosen in order to anchor spectators' feelings to the emotions depicted on stage. Conventionalized postures and poses, as also developed in 18th and 19th century studies of physiognomy, play an important role in the artistic depiction of emotions not just in a theatrical context but also in the visual arts and, based on this, in literature (Yulia Marfutova). Contemporary literary texts and those of the 19th and 20th century, on the other hand, show a noticeably more individualized preoccupation with feelings, partly inspired by the idea of irrational patterns as an inherent part of the individual psyche (Pirjo Lyytikäinen). The limits of holding on to a singular identity as a human being overlap with the limits of feelings themselves, the limits of understanding feelings, and the limits of being able experience them (Sabine Schönfellner). Through these reflections upon the subject of human emotion as something potentially elusive, something which cannot be entirely depicted or analysed, the enquiry into emotions gains some deeply ambivalent aspects.

The difficulties emerging in the previous section are at the centre of the section “Writing Wounds”, in which contributions focus on internal psychological processes on the part of literary characters and writing subjects. Here, wounds, identifiable as the starting point of writing (Elise Nykänen), are the core motif which pervades the texts under discussion in various guises (Riikka Rossi). Thematically, mental injuries, personal insecurities and inner conflicts initiate a desperate and often illusionary quest for change and development. The depth of some wounds seems to make it impossible to find adequate means of expression for them, as in the essay focusing on writing about the Shoah (Tom Vanassche), while other authors and characters recognize and utilize writing as the last anchoring point in reality for desperate individuals experiencing psychosis (Anna Ovaska, Laura Oulanne). Despite rarely recovering in the long term, writing helps these individuals to continue a process of reflection and supports them in preserving a continuous sense of identity. The states of astonishment and insecurity of literary subjects ultimately prove to be both productive on a literary level and demanded by audiences. Authors use psychotic states as artistically productive means, while the history of reception of the *Twilight* saga particularly highlights how readers experience the long-awaited liberation from uncertainty as ultimately dissatisfying (Heta Pyrhönen).

In this volume, contributions centring on theory and those with an analytic focus mesh and complement each other. Emotions seem to be immanent in any kind of writing, since they are missed if absent. Writing is consequently emphasized as a process in which emotions are always visible in some manner, and this conceptualisation in turn opens up diverse possibilities to produce, construct, modify, delete, experience or analyse emotions both in the practice of writing and in textual analysis.

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