

AFFECT AND LITERATURE

This book considers how Affect, the experience of feeling or emotion, has developed as a critical concept within literary studies in different periods and through a range of approaches. Stretching from the Classical to the Contemporary, the first section of the book, 'Origins', considers the importance of particular areas of philosophy, theory, and criticism that have been important for conceptualizing affect and its relation to literature, including ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, eighteenth-century aesthetics, Marxist theory, psychoanalysis, queer theory, and postcolonial theory. The chapters of the second section, 'Developments', correspond to those of the previous section and build on their insights through readings of particular texts. The final 'Applications' section is focused on contemporary and future lines of enquiry and revolves around a particular set of concerns: media and communications, capitalism, and an environment of affective relations that extend to ecology, social crisis, and war.

ALEX HOUEN is author of *Terrorism and Modern Literature* (2002), and *Powers of Possibility: Experimental American Writing since the 1960s* (2012). His edited publications include: a special issue on 'Affects, Text, and Performativity' of *Textual Practice* 25:2 (March/April 2011); and (with Jan-Melissa Schramm), *Sacrifice and Modern War Literature: Battle of Waterloo to the War on Terror* (2018). He also co-edits the international journal of poetry, *Blackbox Manifold*.

CAMBRIDGE CRITICAL CONCEPTS

Cambridge Critical Concepts focuses on the important ideas animating twentieth- and twenty-first-century literary studies. Each concept addressed in the series has had a profound impact on literary studies, as well as on other disciplines, and already has a substantial critical bibliography surrounding it. This series captures the dynamic critical energies transmitted across twentieth- and twenty-first-century literary landscapes: the concepts critics bring to reading, interpretation and criticism. By addressing the origins, development and application of these ideas, the books collate and clarify how these particular concepts have developed, while also featuring fresh insights and establishing new lines of enquiry.

Cambridge Critical Concepts shifts the focus from period- or genre-based literary studies of key terms to the history and development of the terms themselves. Broad and detailed contributions cumulatively identify and investigate the various historical and cultural catalysts that made these critical concepts emerge as established twenty-first-century landmarks in the discipline. The level will be suitable for advanced undergraduates, graduates and specialists, as well as for those teaching outside their own research areas, and will have cross-disciplinary relevance for subjects such as history and philosophy.

*Titles in the Series**Law and Literature*

Edited by Kieran Dolin University of Western Australia

Time and Literature

Edited by Thomas M. Allen University of Ottawa

The Global South and Literature

Edited by Russell West-Pavlov University of Tübingen

Trauma and Literature

Edited by Roger Kurtz The College at Brockport, State University of New York

Food and Literature

Edited by Gitanjali Shahani San Francisco State University

Animals, Animality, and Literature

Edited by Bruce Boehrer, Molly Hand and Brian Massumi Florida State University, University of Montreal

Terrorism and Literature

Edited by Peter Herman San Diego State University

Climate and Literature

Edited by Adeline Johns University of Surrey

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-42451-6 — Affect and Literature
Edited by Alex Houen
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Orientalism and Literature

Edited by Geoffrey Nash SOAS, University of London

Decadence and Literature

Edited by Jane Desmarais and David Weir Goldsmith College and Hunter College

Affect and Literature

Edited by Alex Houen University of Cambridge

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-42451-6 — Affect and Literature
Edited by Alex Houen
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

AFFECT AND LITERATURE

EDITED BY
ALEX HOUEN
University of Cambridge



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-42451-6 — Affect and Literature
Edited by Alex Houen
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108424516
DOI: 10.1017/9781108339339

© Cambridge University Press 2020

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2020

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd. Padstow Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-108-42451-6 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	<i>page x</i>
Introduction: Affect and Literature <i>Alex Houen</i>	1
I ORIGINS	31
1. Poetic Fear-Related Affects and Society in Greco-Roman Antiquity <i>Dana LaCourse Munteanu</i>	33
2. Secondary Affect in Lessing, Mendelssohn, and Nicolai <i>Stefan Uhlig</i>	49
3. Affect and Life in Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Bergson <i>John Protevi</i>	66
4. Feelings under the Microscope: New Critical Affect <i>Helen Thaventhiran</i>	83
5. ‘We Manufacture Fun’: Capital and the Production of Affect <i>Ross Wilson</i>	100
6. Jacques Lacan’s Evanescent Affects <i>Jean-Michel Rabaté</i>	116
7. The Durability of Affect and the Ageing of Gay Male Queer Theory <i>Geoff Gilbert</i>	133
8. Affect, Meaning, Becoming, and Power: Massumi, Spinoza, Deleuze, and Neuroscience <i>Anthony Uhlmann</i>	159

viii	<i>Contents</i>	
9.	Translating Postcolonial Affect <i>Sneja Gunew</i>	175
10.	Making Sorrow Sweet: Emotion and Empathy in the Experience of Fiction <i>Alison Denham</i>	190
II	DEVELOPMENTS	211
11.	Feeling Feelings in Early Modern England <i>Benedict S. Robinson</i>	213
12.	Laughable Poetry <i>Matthew Bevis</i>	229
13.	Modernism, Formal Innovation, and Affect in some Contemporary Irish Novels <i>Derek Attridge</i>	249
14.	The Antihumanist Tone <i>Christopher Nealon</i>	267
15.	Bette Davis's Eyes and Minoritarian Survival: Camp, Melodrama, and Spectatorship <i>Amber Jamilla Musser</i>	284
16.	Affective Form <i>Ankhi Mukherjee</i>	300
17.	Subaltern Affects <i>Stephen Morton</i>	317
III	APPLICATIONS	335
18.	Affect and Environment in Contemporary Eco-poetics <i>Margaret Ronda</i>	337
19.	Contemporary Crisis Fictions: Twenty-First Century Disaffection <i>Emily Horton</i>	355
20.	Shiny Happy Imperialism: An Affective Exploration of 'Ways of Life' in the War on Terror <i>Amira Jarmakani</i>	373

	<i>Contents</i>	ix
21.	The Digital's Amodal Affect <i>Andrew Murphie</i>	390
22.	Digital Special Affects: On Exhilaration and the Stun in CGI Blockbuster Films <i>Eric Jenkins</i>	408
23.	Cartesian Affect <i>Claire Colebrook</i>	425
	<i>Index</i>	444

Notes on Contributors

DEREK ATTRIDGE is Emeritus Professor at the University of York, UK; his most recent books are *The Experience of Poetry: From Homer's Listeners to Shakespeare's Readers* (2019), *The Work of Literature* (2017), and, as co-editor, *Zoë Wicomb and the Translocal: Writing Scotland and South Africa* (2017). Also in 2017, *The Singularity of Literature* (2004) was re-issued in the Routledge Classics series. He is a Fellow of the British Academy.

MATTHEW BEVIS is a Professor in the Faculty of English, Oxford University, and a Fellow of Keble College. His books include *The Art of Eloquence: Byron, Dickens, Tennyson, Joyce* (2007), *Comedy: A Very Short Introduction* (2012), and *Wordsworth's Fun* (2019). His recent essays have appeared in *Harper's*, *The London Review of Books*, *Raritan*, *Poetry*, and other magazines and journals. He is currently working on two books: *Knowing Edward Lear*, and *On Wonder*.

CLAIRE COLEBROOK is Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of English, Philosophy and Women's and Gender Studies at Penn State University. She has written books and articles on contemporary European philosophy, literary history, gender studies, queer theory, visual culture and feminist philosophy. Her most recent book is *Twilight of the Anthropocene Idols* (co-authored with Tom Cohen and J. Hillis Miller).

ALISON DENHAM'S research addresses issues in ethics, aesthetics and moral psychology. She is the author of *Metaphor and Moral Experience* (2000) and, as contributing editor, *Plato on Art & Beauty* (2011). Denham is jointly appointed to the Departments of Philosophy and Political Economy at Tulane University, New Orleans. She is also a Senior Research Fellow at St Anne's College, Oxford and an associate of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Oxford.

Notes on Contributors

xi

GEOFF GILBERT is Professor of Comparative Literature and English at the American University of Paris. He is the author of *Before Modernism Was* (2004), and essays on modernism, critical theory and political economy, sexuality, contemporary writing, poetics and prosody, and translation. He is working on a study of contemporary realism, which considers how writing arrives to us across capitalized geographical and linguistic distances.

SNEJA GUNEW (FRSC) is Professor Emerita of English and Women's and Gender Studies at the University of British Columbia, Canada. She has edited *Feminist Knowledge: Critique and Construct* and *A Reader in Feminist Knowledge* (1990–91). In Australia, she compiled (with others) *A Bibliography of Australian Multicultural Writers* (the first such compilation in Australia) and co-edited *Striking Chords: Multicultural Literary Interpretations* (1992), the first collection of critical essays to deal with ethnic minority writings in the Australian context. She set up the first library collection of ethnic minority writings in Australia. Continuing her focus on cultural difference, Gunew edited (with Anna Yeatman) *Feminism and the Politics of Difference* (1993) and (with Fazal Rizvi) *Arts for a Multicultural Australia: Issues and Strategies* (1994). Her books include *Framing Marginality: Multicultural Literary Studies* (1994) and *Haunted Nations: The Colonial Dimensions of Multiculturalisms* (2004). Based in Canada since 1993, her most recent book is titled: *Post-Multicultural Writers as Neo-Cosmopolitan Mediators* (2017).

EMILY HORTON is a lecturer in English Literature at Brunel University. Her research interests include contemporary Anglophone world literature, specializing in trauma fiction; genre and popular fiction; and fictional explorations of globalization and cosmopolitanism. Her first monograph, *Contemporary Crisis Fictions*, was published with Palgrave Macmillan in 2014. She has also co-edited two volumes: *The 1980s: A Decade in Contemporary British Fiction*, co-edited with Philip Tew and Leigh Wilson (2014); and *Ali Smith*, co-edited with Monica Germanà (2013).

ALEX HOUEN is a University Senior Lecturer in Modern Literature in the Faculty of English, University of Cambridge, and a Fellow of Pembroke College. He is the author of *Terrorism and Modern Literature* (2002), and *Powers of Possibility: Experimental American Writing since the 1960s* (2012). His edited publications include: a special issue on 'Affects, Text, and Performativity' of *Textual Practice* 25:2 (March/April 2011); and

(with Jan-Melissa Schramm), *Sacrifice and Modern War Literature: Battle of Waterloo to the War on Terror* (2018). He also co-edits the international journal of poetry, *Blackbox Manifold*.

AMIRA JARMAKANI is Professor of Women's Studies and affiliated faculty member with the Center for Islamic and Arabic Studies at San Diego State University. Her most recent book, *An Imperialist Love Story: Desert Romances and the War on Terror* (2015), explores the crucial role of desire in understanding how the war on terror works and how it perseveres. She also authored *Imagining Arab Womanhood: The Cultural Mythology of Veils, Harems, and Belly Dancers in the US* (2008), which won the National Women's Studies Association Gloria E. Anzaldúa book prize.

ERIC JENKINS is Associate Professor of Communication at the University of Cincinnati. He is the author of *Special Affects: Cinema, Animation, and the Translation of Consumer Culture* (2014) and of many articles in journals ranging from *Critical Inquiry* to *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* to *Game Studies*. He is currently completing a second book on digital media and affect entitled *Surfing the Anthropocene: On the Big Tensions of Virtual Life*.

STEPHEN MORTON is Professor of English and Postcolonial Literatures at the University of Southampton. He is currently completing two monographs on 'Allegories of the World-System: Dispossession and the Commons in Postcolonial World Literature' and 'In the Debt Colony: A Cultural History of Colonial Debt'. His publications include *States of Emergency: Colonialism, Literature, and Law* (2013); *Terror and the Postcolonial*, co-edited with Elleke Boehmer (2009); *Foucault in an Age of Terror*, co-edited with Stephen Bygrave (2008); *Salman Rushdie: Fictions of Postcolonial Modernity* (2007); *Gayatri Spivak: Ethics, Subalternity and the Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (2006); and *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak* (2003). He has also published articles in *Public Culture*, *Interventions*, *Textual Practice*, *New Formations*, *Ariel*, and *Research in African Literatures*.

ANKHI MUKHERJEE is Professor of English and World Literatures at the University of Oxford. She is the author of *Aesthetic Hysteria: The Great Neurosis in Victorian Melodrama and Contemporary Fiction* (2007) and *What Is a Classic? Postcolonial Rewriting and Invention of the Canon* (2014), which won the British Academy Rose Mary Crawshay Prize in English Literature in 2015. Mukherjee has published articles on a wide range of topics – Victorian literature and culture, intellectual history,

modern fiction, postcolonial studies – in journals such as *PMLA*, *MLQ*, *Paragraph*, *Parallax*, *Contemporary Literature*, and the *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry*. She has co-edited *A Concise Companion to Psychoanalysis, Literature and Culture* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2015) and edited *After Lacan* (Cambridge University Press, 2018). She is currently working on an AHRC- and Wellcome Trust-funded book project, ‘Unseen City: The Psychic Life of the Poor in Mumbai, London, and New York’.

DANA LACOURSE MUNTEANU is Associate Professor in the Department of Classics, Ohio State University. She is the author of *Tragic Pathos: Pity and Fear in Greek Philosophy and Tragedy* (2012), the editor of *Emotion, Genre and Gender in Classical Antiquity* (2011), and co-editor of *A Handbook to Classical Reception in Eastern and Central Europe* (2017). Her interests include philosophy, ancient drama, and the reception of classics in modern literature.

ANDREW MURPHIE is an Associate Professor in Media and Communications at UNSW, Sydney. He works on philosophy and a politics of differential organization within a ‘third revolution’ in media and communications (AI and automation, VR, data and signal-etics, the world as medium). He also works on climate change as part of catastrophic multiplicity.

AMBER JAMILLA MUSSER is Associate Professor of American Studies at The George Washington University. Her research lies at the intersection of race, sexuality, queer theory, and aesthetics. She is the author of *Sensational Flesh: Race, Power, and Masochism* (2014) and *Sensual Excess: Queer Femininity and Brown Jouissance* (2018).

CHRISTOPHER NEALON teaches in the Department of English at Johns Hopkins University. He is the author of *The Matter of Capital: Poetry and Crisis in the American Century* (2011).

JOHN PROTEVI is Phyllis M. Taylor Professor of French Studies and Professor of Philosophy at Louisiana State University. His most recent books are all with University of Minnesota Press: *Edges of the State* (2019); *Life, War, Earth* (2013); and *Political Affect* (2009). He maintains a website with teaching materials and research papers at www.protevi.com/john

JEAN-MICHEL RABATÉ, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Pennsylvania since 1992, is one of the

editors of the *Journal of Modern Literature*. He is co-founder and senior curator of the Slought Foundation, where he organizes exhibitions, conferences, and public conversations. Since 2008, he has also been a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He is author or editor of more than forty books on modernism, psychoanalysis, philosophy and literary theory. Recent titles include *Rust* (2018) and *Kafka L.O.L.* (2018).

BENEDICT S. ROBINSON is Associate Professor of English at Stony Brook University. His first book, *Islam and Early Modern English Literature*, appeared from Palgrave in 2007. An edition of John Webster's play *The White Devil* appeared from Arden Early Modern Drama in December 2018. Articles have appeared in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *SEL*, *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, and elsewhere. He recently completed a book-manuscript entitled *The Accidents of the Soul*, and is currently at work on another tentatively titled *Resentment: 1500–1800*. Articles on passion and affect in the early modern period have appeared in *ELH* (2014) and in *Affect Theory and Early Modern Texts*, edited by Mario DiGangi and Amanda Bailey (2017).

MARGARET RONDA is an Associate Professor in the Department of English at the University of California-Davis, where she teaches American poetry and environmental theory and literature. She is the author of *Remainders: American Poetry at Nature's End* (2018).

HELEN THAVENTHIRAN is a University Lecturer in Modern Literature in the Faculty of English, University of Cambridge, and a Fellow of Robinson College. She is the author of *Radical Empiricists* (2015) and a number of articles and book chapters about criticism, literature and philosophy. She is co-editor of a forthcoming critical edition of William Empson's *The Structure of Complex Words*.

STEFAN UHLIG is Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of California, Davis. His work has been focused on the history of literary studies, Wordsworth, Goethe, world literature, and Humboldt. His co-edited works include: with Daniel Purdy and Chunjie Zhang, *Goethe, Worlds, and Literatures*, a special issue of *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies*, 54.2 (2018); with Alexander Regier, *Wordsworth's Poetic Theory: Knowledge, Language,*

Notes on Contributors

xv

Experience (2010); and, with Peter de Bolla, *Aesthetics and the Work of Art: Adorno, Kafka, Richter* (2009).

ANTHONY UHLMANN is Director of the Writing and Society Research Centre at Western Sydney University, Australia. He is the author of four monographs on literature and philosophy, most recently *J. M. Coetzee, Truth, Meaning, Fiction* (2020). He is currently working on a project related to Spinoza and Literature.

ROSS WILSON is Lecturer in Criticism in the Faculty of English, University of Cambridge. He is the author of *Theodor Adorno* (2007) and *Shelley and the Apprehension of Life* (2013), as well as essays on English poetry, literary theory, and aesthetics.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-42451-6 — Affect and Literature
Edited by Alex Houen
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)
