

SILESIAN STUDIES IN ANGLOPHONE CULTURES  
AND LITERATURES 5

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# Spectrum of Emotions

From Love to Grief



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## Editors' Preface

The articles gathered in this volume under the umbrella term of a spectrum of emotions take as their point of departure the conviction that there is a tangible need for a revision of the vocabulary of emotion used in literary studies, culture studies and criticism. *Spectrum of Emotions* endeavours to propose a modest re-opening of this discussion, which in its preliminary format reveals a wide range of methodological, often interdisciplinary approaches as well as a spectrum of what have been traditionally defined as – paraphrasing George Bernard Shaw – pleasant and unpleasant emotions. The discussions contained in this volume demonstrate that the once stable and capacious concept of emotion disintegrates in the course of re-evaluations which re-introduce seemingly familiar but thoroughly redefined terms such as *affects*, *passions*, *feelings*, and *emotions*. The development of a distinct vocabulary of emotion and affect becomes the essential task of researchers and it commences with the differentiation between a range of internally coherent, conceptualizing, culturally, psychologically or sociologically constructed subjective emotions, as aspects of thought, and the non-subjective, often conceived as unformed, intensities of affect. *Feelings* may connote both affect and emotions but can be perceived as a bridging concept oscillating between emotion and affect. The following series of discussions has been ordered along the rationally formulated cognitive concepts of emotions which seem to prevail, with one or two exceptions, in the texts included in this volume. Notwithstanding the prevalence of the traditional approaches, traces of re-evaluations are to be found in most of the articles.

The first part of the volume comprises six articles that examine aspects of love in several literary and philosophical texts in English, mostly from the twentieth or twenty-first centuries. Joanna Bukowska's "The Tour of *The Court of Love*: The Tradition of Amatory Poetry and its Readjustments in Chaucerian Apocrypha" – the only article in the section devoted to a much earlier work – considers the representation of affection in the sixteenth-century poem often categorized as belonging to Chaucerian apocrypha. Bukowska's analysis demonstrates the poem's heavy reliance on the medieval tradition of courtly love but also indicates the influence of certain Renaissance ideals (such as the endorsement of a regulated, long-term relationship). Aleksandra Kędzierska's "'Memories of Love': Seamus Heaney's *Human Chain*" is a study of the Irish Nobel Prize winner's last collection of verse, released in 2010 – four years before his death. The volume contains many poetic "letters" to and about those whom Heaney loved. Concerned specifically with the poet's portrayal of his parents and grandchildren, Kędzierska's article

explores various aspects and definitions of love, demonstrating that love relies on – in Heaney's own words – “steady gazing” at one another as well as looking together “in the same direction.”

Anna Cholewa-Purgał's “Romantic Theology of Love According to Charles Williams” and Tomasz Kulka's “The Sense of the Divine: The Complexities of Wonder in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*” are both concerned with the love of God. Cholewa-Purgał outlines the concept of love as propounded by Charles Williams (1886–1945), an English poet, playwright, and Christian lay theologian. The author describes the roots of Williams's romantic theology (including Platonism and Dante's works) and considers his celebration of married love as an affirmation of Christ. Kulka, in turn, focuses on the protagonist of *Gilead*, a dying Congregationalist pastor John Ames, who is writing a book-long letter to his seven-year-old son. The aim of the article is to examine the awe and wonder at pedestrian existence that pervade Ames's thoughts and place his experience in the long tradition of Christian (especially Calvinist) theology, where the confrontation with the ordinary may lead to an encounter with the divine.

The next two texts in the first section are interested in the interplay of love and sexuality. Maria Antonietta Struzziero's “Discourses of Love and Desire in Jeanette Winterson's *Lighthousekeeping*” uses the theories of Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes to examine the discourses of love voiced in the novel. Struzziero argues that Winterson problematizes and transforms the clichéd language of love into an instrument for innovative expression, effacing gender distinctions and questioning the traditional closure of the romance. In “The Obscene Emotions of Nell Dunn,” Rod Mengham investigates the impact of the 1959 Obscene Publications Act and the famous trial of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in 1960 on the English literature of the 1960s. In the second half of the article, Mengham concentrates on the relationship between obscenity and morality in two of Dunn's novels – *Up the Junction* and *Poor Cow*.

The articles grouped in the second part of the volume examine different aspects of shame based on three examples: two real-life figures and one literary. Tomasz Basiuk's “Warhol and Queer Shame” – drawing on essays by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Douglas Crimp, Michael Moon and Jonathan Flatley – revisits readings of Andy Warhol's queering interest in shame as a performative and artistic strategy, which is traceable in his silkscreens and in his films. Basiuk argues that Warhol's queer performances of shame, which attest to his keen interest in his own and others' proneness to shame experiences, illustrate Sedgwick's thesis that shame serves to both make and unmake identities. Elżbieta Klimek-Dominiak in “Double Portrait with Ambiguous Loss: Shame, Grief and Art in Patti Smith's

Relational Memoir *Just Kids*" discusses the American singer-songwriter's autobiographical narrative as an illustration of Pauline Boss's concept of "ambiguous loss," Kosofsky Sedgwick's "transformative shame," and Judith Butler's "disorientation of grief." Klimek-Dominiak maintains that the uniqueness of *Just Kids* lies not only in Smith's powerful evocation of terminal illness but in her ability to combine representations of the disturbing themes of grieving, stigmatization and vulnerability with performative dissent. Finally, Dominika Ferens's "Belated Interest: Reading the Fiction of Sigrid Nunez through Silvan Tomkins's Affect Theory" offers a reading of the contemporary American writer's novel *For Rouenna* through affect theory as developed by Tomkins in the 1960s and revived in the 1990s by Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank. Ferens focuses on the dramatic interplay of two of the eight affects singled out by Tomkins – interest and shame.

The third part of the volume consists of articles examining different emotional responses to the experience of loss – ranging from grief to nostalgia. Rachael Sumner's "The Anatomy of Grief in Ali Smith's novel *How to Be Both*" and Anna Maria Tomczak's "Ways of Grieving: Bharati Mukherjee's 'The Management of Grief' and Jhumpa Lahiri's 'Hema and Kaushik'" investigate representations of mourning in chosen examples of contemporary fiction in English. Referring to several theories of grief, Sumner considers the long journey from bereavement to recovery undertaken by one of the protagonists of Smith's novel, a teenage girl named George, who mourns the untimely death of her mother. Tomczak's article reads Mukherjee's short story and Lahiri's novella as statements in a cultural debate on the universality of emotions. The author concludes that while sadness is a basic human emotion and a natural reaction to loss regardless of one's ethnicity, ways of expressing grief are shown in the those texts as culture-specific. Rowland Cotterill's "Emotions, Emotionalism, and Moods: Can We Give Hamlet Any Good Advice?" is an exploration of Hamlet's complex emotional response to his violent confrontation with loss. Cotterill argues that Hamlet sustains durable and intelligible networks of emotions, directed towards those projected by other characters. He manages, the author claims, to sustain at all times emotional alertness, embodying at once a restless play of moods and a self sovereign over them. In "Travel Books, Nostalgia and Paratexts: The Case of Patrick Leigh Fermor's *A Time of Gifts*," Grzegorz Moroz examines one of the masterpieces of British travel writing, which documents Leigh Fermor's two-year-long walk across Europe from Hook van Holland to Istanbul. Moroz investigates the nuanced ways in which *A Time of Gifts* employs nostalgia – particularly through its paratexts, such as the epigrammatic epigraphs, the introductory letter, and the front cover of the book.

The next section is devoted to explorations of the emotional legacy of trauma. Bożena Kucała, in her article "Reticence and Reclusion in William Trevor's *The Story of Lucy Gault*," examines the depiction of emotional suppression and loneliness in the life of the title character of Trevor's novel. Kucała argues that the author's subdued, sparse style is perfectly suited to the quietude and uneventfulness of Lucy's life and conveys a poignant sense of loss and isolation without resorting to overt psychological analysis. Andrzej Księżopolski's "Emotional Carnage: Experience and Recollections of War in McEwan's *Atonement*" considers how the texture of the novel is constructed on the basis of an interweaving of personal drama, on the one hand, and the collective trauma of war, on the other. The article also signals the artful ways in which McEwan's novel engages the reader in the tragedy of history without slipping into pathos. The final article in this part of the volume, "A Welter of Emotions': (Re)writing Exile in Irina Pană's Romanian-Australian Memoir" by Corina Crișu, situates Pană's *Melbourne Sundays* in the context of a significant body of autobiographical writing in English by Eastern European female immigrants (such as Eva Hoffman, Kapka Kassabova, and Vesna Goldsworthy). Crișu argues that Pană's book, despite numerous parallels with the other texts, is far more intertextual (or *livresque*). Its immersion in other textual sources, however, does not lower its emotional poignancy.

The last section of the volume consists of two articles that are not concerned with a specific point on the spectrum of emotions, but rather with a whole gamut of emotional response. Wojciech Kozak's "Envy Revisited: Muriel Spark's *The Finishing School*" discusses the Scottish writer's last published novel as an account of a tragicomic relationship between the protagonist, the owner of a school for the children of rich entrepreneurs and a creative writing teacher, Rowland Mahler, and his brilliant seventeen-year-old student Chris Wiley, who is a literary prodigy. The article concentrates on the feeling of envy, both personal and professional, but considers also other emotional states that accompany the development of the rapport between this unlikely couple. The final article in the volume is Michael Hollington's "Music, Poetry, Parody: Collins's 'The Passions: An Ode for Music' and Dickens's *Great Expectations*" – a study of William Collins's famous ode in relation to its musical setting in 1750 by William Hayes. Hollington explores certain aspects of the poem's long life as a recitation piece, placing the emphasis on the parodic reference to the piece in Dickens's novel. The author ponders the legitimacy of Dickens's dismissive treatment, taking into account the intervening shift in meaning of the word "passion" from a synonym of "emotion" to a marker of exclusively strong emotions.