



AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR THE
HISTORY OF EMOTIONS

Emotional Bodies in Context

Friday 12 April 2019

Ira Raymond Room, University of Adelaide



Caricature of a Man-Midwife as a Split Figure, Wellcome Collection L0018481

Programme

8:45–9:15 Registration

9:15–9:30 Welcome

9:30–10:30 Keynote

Chair: Claire Walker

'Out of Order and a Low-Spirited Frame': Feeling Body and Emotion in Eighteenth-Century English Letters

Prof Karen Harvey, University of Birmingham

10:30–11:00 Tea break

11:00–12:30 Panel 1: The Emotional Uses of Human and Non-Human Bodies

Chair: TBC

Talking Wolves, Golden Fish, and Lion Sex: Hybrid Bodies, Doubt, Anger, and Author-Audience Conflict in Gerald of Wales's Revisions to his Topographia Hibernica

Keagan Brewer, The University of Sydney

Narratives of Victimhood in the Ukrainian Diaspora: Invoking Affect in Miron Dolot's Execution by Hunger

Elise Westin, The University of Adelaide

Emotional Bodies and Corporate Profits: Understanding Australia's Digital Healthcare Landscape

Leanne Downing, La Trobe University

12:30–1:30 Lunch

1:30–3:00 Panel 2: Gender, Self, Emotion

Chair: TBC

Performing Sympathy, from Sentimentalism to Romanticism

Mark Neuendorf, The University of Adelaide

Xiao Lu: Art and Emotion

Claire Roberts, The University of Melbourne

Becoming the Empress of India: Indira Gandhi's Character, Personality and Leadership as Prime Minister

Peter Mayer, The University of Adelaide

3:00–3:30 Tea break

3:30–4:30 Roundtable: Emotional Bodies in Context

Katie Barclay, Claire Walker, Karen Harvey

4:30 Finish

Participants are welcome to join us for a glass of wine and dinner at their own expense.

Abstracts and bios

Prof Karen Harvey, University of Birmingham

'Out of Order and a Low-Spirited Frame': Feeling Body and Emotion in Eighteenth-Century English Letters

In eighteenth-century Britain, individual experiences of embodiment were ineluctably shaped by the social contexts of family and kin, friendship and faith. Using eighteenth-century familiar letters, this paper examines men's and women's descriptions of embodied experiences, and the place of emotions within them, in order to explore how they were affected by social factors. The paper focusses closely on letter-writers' own language. The way these women and men described the mind, body and emotion could be non-specific, vague or even contradictory, yet their metaphorical language richly conveyed the experience of being a feeling body. Importantly, they described embodiment as combining physical, mental and emotional states. Whilst social historians of medicine have explored these issues in some detail for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this paper examines the continuing corporeal experience of emotion throughout the eighteenth century, raising questions about established chronologies of forms of 'embodiment' in the history of the body. Instead, the paper suggests that we should regard embodiment as a relational and socially-situated process, one that combines personal language, shared lexicons and corporeality, and that varies historically according to a range of social factors.

Keagan Brewer, The University of Sydney

Talking Wolves, Golden Fish, and Lion Sex: Hybrid bodies, doubt, anger, and author-audience conflict in Gerald of Wales's revisions to his Topographia Hibernica

Gerald of Wales visited Ireland in the 1180s and wrote his first book, *The Topography of Ireland (Topographia Hibernica)*, on the basis of his trip. Among other Irish wonders, Gerald reports the existence of category-transgressing bodies: talking werewolves, an ox-man and a man-ox, a bearded woman, an Irish woman who seduced a he-goat, and a Parisian lion that repeatedly had sex with a woman named Johanna to calm its temper. Scholars have often considered these tales through a postcolonial lens, that is, they appear to justify the Anglo-Norman invasions of Ireland by othering the Irish. Recent research into the text's complex manuscript traditions has brought greater focus to Gerald's revisions of it over the next several decades. In this paper, I chart how his revisions show a pattern of defensiveness to the hybrid-bodied wonders in particular. These revisions can be read retrospectively as evidence that some audiences, particularly at his Oxford recitation of 1188/9, found them objectionable in terms of their truth, and in relation to tangled questions of theology, science, and morality. Bodies that were wondrous and/or fearsome to Gerald proved doubtful and anger-inducing for some audience members. Some, such as William de Montibus, were frustrated by Gerald's consideration of bestiality as a legitimate object of ethnological discourse, while an earlier critic appears to have considered hybridity as a transgression of hexameral categories. The reception of these tales therefore wraps up a complex nexus of emotion, belief, and politics that moved beyond the binary of repulsion-attraction to monstrous or hybrid bodies.

Dr Keagan Brewer is an Honorary Research Associate at The University of Sydney's Medieval and Early Modern Centre. He is the Deputy Representative of the University of Sydney node of the ARC Centre for Excellence in the History of the Emotions. Keagan specialises in twelfth- and thirteenth-century encounters—both intellectual and actual—between Europe and Asia, including the Latin East, legends, the associated mentalities of wonder and doubt, and their intersection with Christian belief. Keagan enjoys textual editing and translation, and has published in the *Crusade Texts in Translation* series.

Leanne Downing, La Trobe University

Emotional Bodies and Corporate Profits: Understanding Australia's Digital Healthcare Landscape

This presentation considers the intersection of emotional bodies and corporate profits within Australia's digital healthcare landscape. Using the Fairfax (Nine) Essential Baby® online parenting platform as a case study, I will explore the ways in which companies such as Fairfax deliberately profit from the creation of dedicated spaces in which individuals are encouraged to share their thoughts, emotions and experiences with one another over a wide range of health and wellbeing topics. Central to this discussion will be the questions: What role do emotions play in today's digital healthcare landscape? and How can the concept of 'affective atmospheres' be used to discuss the emotions elicited by human and non-human interactions in these specific environments?

Dr Leanne Downing is an Adjunct Senior Lecturer in the Department of Public Health at La Trobe University. She has a PhD in Media Studies (La Trobe University 2005) and has held academic teaching and research positions at several institutions throughout Australia and New Zealand. Leanne is also the Principal Director of Affect Media, a digital communications agency which services the digital healthcare space.

Peter Mayer, The University of Adelaide

Becoming the Empress of India: Indira Gandhi's Character, Personality and Leadership as Prime Minister

Indira Gandhi grew up in a politically turbulent household. During her formative years, her father, grandfather and later her mother and other female relatives spent lengthy periods of time in British jails for their acts of civil disobedience in India's struggle for independence. Indira as a child was perceived as 'docile, quiet, undemanding and obedient'. She told a later interviewer 'no one ever noticed me'. She also recalled that the crowds which swirled around her very prominent family and periodic raids by the police meant that 'the house was always in such a state of tension that nobody had a normal life'. This caused her to build 'up a lot of hatred and bitterness inside me'. In adolescence she spent long and lonely periods apart from her family attending thirteen different schools in India and Europe. Living for decades in the shadow of her famous father, Indira was judged by many of India's senior politicians to be a 'mere slip of a girl', a shy, pliable woman whom they could easily manipulate to further their own ends. As Prime Minister, Indira revealed a steely decisiveness which confounded those who had elevated her. She split the venerable Congress party in 1967; waged a successful war to create Bangladesh in 1971; declared a State of Emergency in 1975 and authorised a military assault of the Sikh Golden Temple in Amritsar, the repercussions of which led ultimately to her assassination in 1974. This paper seeks to link the lonely girl her cousin regarded as 'a gangling awkward girl' to the mature 'cutter of Gordian knots'. It builds on the remarkable analysis of the personalities and character of all United States presidents from Washington to Clinton by Rubenzer and Faschingbauer (Rubenzer, Faschingbauer, and Ones 2000, Rubenzer and Faschingbauer 2004) utilising the NEO personality inventory, as well as a study of the personality of India's current Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, utilising the same NEO methodology (Mayer 2015).

Peter Mayer is Associate Professor of Politics and Visiting Research Fellow at The University of Adelaide. He has written on many aspects of Indian politics and economics and is a frequent media commentator on South Asian issues. His recent published work has examined a diverse range of issues including: why the proportion of women in the Indian population has steadily declined since 1901 and whether this predisposes north India to violence; the role played by civic engagement and social capital in the human development performance of the Indian states; the origins of a zone of weak governance in the Indus-Ganges plains; an analysis of political patterns underlying communal violence in India and

the declining rate of serious attacks on India's Dalits. He has also published studies of different aspects of suicide in India, including *Suicide and Society in India* (2011), a major study of the sociology of suicide in India.

Mark Neuendorf, University of Adelaide

Performing Sympathy, from Sentimentalism to Romanticism

Across Britain's long eighteenth century, 'sympathy' and its embodiment became a subject of intense enquiry from theologians and moralists. Preoccupied with the sincerity of so-called sentimental emotions (e.g. theatrical swoons and tearful displays), their speculations encouraged an urgent scrutiny of the moral affections, be it those performed by others (i.e. as external manifestations of 'sensibility'), or the inner stirrings of feeling that constituted the virtuous self. For sentimental observers, who regarded sympathetic affection as the basis of honour, the necessity to achieve the correct 'aesthetic experiences and embodied forms of meaning' (as Monique Scheer puts it) prompted the ongoing navigation of emotions; depending on the dominant emotional norms, this could require complex management strategies. Drawing upon the writings on one exemplary sentimentalist – the Evangelical moralist Hannah More – this paper examines the deployment of such strategies in the late eighteenth century, and considers their effect on the self-definition of the emergent middle classes. It shows that by rehearsing emotional and aesthetic responses in relation to art and literature, many contemporaries were able to successfully affect an appropriate emotional style when faced with 'spectacles of sympathy'. However, this very reliance on external spectacle to arouse 'moral' emotions simultaneously raised questions about the sincerity of such feelings: anxieties which were exacerbated when the rehearsed emotional practices failed, and terminated in unexpected or aberrant emotions. The resulting malaise ultimately drove dissatisfaction with the prevailing emotional norms, and the paper concludes by demonstrating that this distrust of sentimental emotions initiated a shift in the dominant emotional regime, prompting observers to broaden the scope of 'sympathetic' affection to ease the demands on their own emotional self-management.

Mark Neuendorf is a Visiting Research Fellow at The University of Adelaide. His research examines the intersection of emotions and psychiatry, broadly defined. His current project, funded by the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals, examines the emotional cultures of British psychiatric publishing, with a particular focus on the professional self-fashioning of working-class mental nurses.

Claire Roberts, The University of Melbourne

Xiao Lu: Art and Emotion

Xiao Lu's performance art provokes a complex range of responses, including about what it means to be an artist and a woman in China. Her work fearlessly expresses her desire to break through societal norms and achieve transcendence. The body is a site for abjection and agency. Xiao Lu (b. 1962) is best known for her installation *Dialogue* displayed in the landmark 'China/Avant-Garde Exhibition' at the National Art Gallery, Beijing, in February 1989. The installation comprised two telephone booths — a novelty in China at the time — separated by a central plinth on top of which was placed a red phone, the hand receiver dangling off the hook, with mirror glass behind. Photographic images of a man and a woman, their backs to the viewer, could be seen inside the booths. The act of the artist shooting her sculptural work at the opening of the exhibition, a milestone in the development of contemporary art in China, has been read locally and internationally as an avant-garde act marking a critical turning point in China's recent history. While *Dialogue* is one of the best known works of twentieth century Chinese art, it is also one of the most misunderstood, in part owing to the artist's belated acknowledgment that the work, and in particular the gun shots through which she asserted herself in a symbolic act of self-destruction, were a response to complex personal emotions ultimately arising from an earlier abusive betrayal of

trust. On the 30th anniversary of the 'China/Avant-Garde Exhibition', this talk will critically re-examine Dialogue and its fraught relationship to the writing of art history. It will also consider later works including *15 Gunshots... From 1989 to 2003* (2003) and *Wedlock* (2019), which mark 15 and 20 years since the 'China/Avant-Garde Exhibition' respectively, and *Tides* (2019) a response to Xiao Lu's thirty-year association with Australia and her eight-year period of residence in Sydney (1989–1997).

Claire Roberts FAHA is an art historian specialising in modern and contemporary Chinese art and cultural flows between Australia and Asia. She is an Australian Research Council (ACR) Future Fellow and Associate Professor of Art History in the School of Culture and Communication at The University of Melbourne. She has PhD from The Australian National University. Her most recent books are *Photography and China* (2013) and *Friendship in Art: Fou Lei and Huang Binhong* (2010). Claire's current ARC research project 'Reconfiguring the World. China. Art. Agency 1900s to Now' focuses on the international context of modern and contemporary Chinese art.

Elise Westin, The University of Adelaide

Narratives of Victimhood in the Ukrainian Diaspora: Invoking Affect in Miron Dolot's Execution by Hunger

The Holodomor was a man-made famine in early 1930s Ukraine that wiped out a quarter of the nation's rural population. Ukrainians affected by the famine suffered a number of traumatic experiences, perhaps the most unspeakable of which was cannibalism. Many of the survivors left their homeland to form communities in parts of the West, including North America, where their identities have been shaped by their memories of the past. This research explores the re-creation of Miron Dolot's encounter with cannibalism during the Holodomor through personal narrative in *Execution by Hunger* (1985), and the ways in which ideas of embodied affect (Ahmed 2013) are used to express a narrative of victimhood. Affect provides a means of sharing experiences with others and revealing what Felman and Laub (1992) call 'higher truths'. For the Holodomor, this means delineating the collective 'self' as victim from the 'other' as perpetrator. This dichotomy becomes problematic with the introduction of cannibals as both victims of the famine and perpetrators of violence. This research explores how Dolot navigates this issue, using affect to maintain the 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy in his narrative of victimhood; a narrative that forms a key part of collective identities in the Ukrainian diaspora and has contributed to the ways in which these experiences are remembered not only by survivors, but by future generations.

Elise Westin is currently a PhD Candidate at The University of Adelaide. Her thesis draws on Goffman's notions of the presentation of the self (1956) and frame analysis (1974) in order to reveal how Ukrainians are framed collectively in a number of published Holodomor survivor testimonies. It explores how the context in which the testimonies were published influenced the construction of these frames and why some voices dominated over others. Her most recent publication is *Text-Based Research and Teaching: A Social Semiotic Perspective on Language in Use*, co-edited with Dr Peter Mickan.