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## What *Moves* Us? Emotion as Connection & Movement

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The study of emotion goes beyond the mere analysis of feeling, and, through its etymological roots, leads us to consider emotion as connected to movement, motion and change. The word *affect* stems from the Latin *afficere*, to act upon or influence, while the word *emotion* can be traced back to the Latin *movere*, to move, both words implying movement. The study of emotion and affect is therefore two-fold, encompassing both movement and causality, actions and reactions, influence and impact. Affect study examines both how something makes us feel, metaphorically and sentimentally *moves* us, and how something *affects* us, what effect feelings have on us. This duality of affect is powerful, and the nine articles in this issue show how encouraging, relevant and vibrant the ever-evolving study of affect is. Each of these nine brilliant articles offers their own new and unique perspective on how emotion and affect *move* within the arts and culture.

The issue is brilliantly prefaced by Fraser Riddell's 'Affect and Interdisciplinarity - Got Rhythm?'. Fraser Riddell's reflective piece draws similarly on the concept of movement, to understanding affect through embodied experience, to listening and responding to the way our body moves through space and reacts to sensory input. It also highlights the importance of interdisciplinarity in affect study and describes the different disciplines working on affect as united through a "shared interest in exploring experiences that are often nebulous, ephemeral or difficult to express" (1). Interdisciplinarity is vital for the study of affect, because emotion is not just a theoretical concept, but fundamentally an embodied experience. Affective encounters need to be approached from a variety of perspectives if we are to understand emotions in their full spectrum. In this sense, emotion is not just about connection between subject and world, and subject and others, but also about disciplinary interconnections. Affect, as we understand it, is about connection itself; and it needs to be a fundamentally collaborative field.

In choosing this theme, we also thought about *our* emotions: Fraser Riddell notes that "[t]he rhythms of an interdisciplinary space – where our research methods are out of sync or out of sequence – can often leave us feeling lost" (5). We mirror and highlight this affect in our careers, recognizing, like Riddell, that this is a central e/affect of academic work, and feelings of isolation and loneliness affect particularly early career researchers. FORUM as a PGR-led journal is aware that in an

increasingly competitive academic landscape, the emotional dimension of working as a researcher is often overlooked. Our journal wants to refocus our attention onto emotion as a space of connection and in choosing “emotion and affect” as our theme for the 35<sup>th</sup> issue of FORUM, we wanted to create that space of connection and collaboration between researchers, but also between universities, authors and disciplinary fields.

Our first section, “Collective Feelings”, examines affect in terms of movement and impact, by showing the different reactions that emotions can evoke within audiences. The focus here is on the political and cultural dimension of affect, which, as Sara Ahmed (2014) defines it, is “about how we are moved by feelings into a different relation to the norms that we wish to contest, or the wounds we wish to heal” (201). Building on this, in the issue’s first article, Magda Barouta examines the transformative possibilities of affective encounters within capitalist medicine as staged in Lucy Prebble’s play *The Effect*, specifically focussing on the emotional impact of the play’s central romantic relationship on the audience. The ability to inspire collective action is explored in the issue’s next article by Giada Ferrucci, who gives us an intricate study of Basia Irland’s trans-medial art and the ability of climate change art to foster ecological awareness and emotional engagement in light of the climate crisis. The first section is then rounded off by Claire Gray’s article, which, by focussing on the interplay of history, music, cultural movements, dance and theatre, analyses how affect can be manipulated for a desired collective emotional response through Gray’s case-study of the 2012 Olympics opening ceremony.

The three articles in our second section, “Ugly Feelings”, put negative emotions at the centre of their analyses and thereby allow room for the feelings that are often avoided rather than confronted. By examining ugly, unwanted and unbearable emotions, these articles recognise the “pressure we feel that points to a system at its limit, a structure or a mind being tested until it appears to bend to the point of nearly giving out” (Berlant 152). In the first article in this section, Fabia Buescher, in her analysis of Henry James’ *The Ambassadors*, focuses on the protagonist’s negative feelings of grief and guilt, how they intersect with his role as the cosmopolitan *flâneur* and ultimately lead to Strether’s failure to form and uphold emotional bonds with others. This is followed by Claudia Maya’s article on Lucy Kirkwood’s play *The Children*, which explores negative feelings such as fear, anxiety, discomfort, envy, irritation and guilt, and how the play uses these emotions to foster a sense of environmental responsibility in its audience. Closing up this section of the journal, Danielle Stephenson then introduces us to the radical potential of weariness, reframing this feeling as an expression of defiance and endurance in Black American Music and thereby highlighting negative emotions’ potential for activism.

For the final section, “Unfeeling”, we refer to Xine Yao’s *Disaffected* (2021) by showing the different ways in which “unfeeling constitutes a break from dominant modes of feeling” (10-11) and by particularly examining queer and marginalised feeling urges us not to underestimate “the possibilities of feeling otherwise” (28). Molly McCracken’s article examines the impossibility of black affect within the structures of white supremacy and analyses how Claudia Rankine’s *Don’t Let Me Be Lonely* portrays the powerful possibility of disaffection. Qiujie Cheng’s article then investigates two novels by Virginia Woolf, and their association of disaffection with Oriental features, thereby carving out the racialised and gendered affective hierarchy in which an absence of emotion is othered. The issue closes with an examination of poetry, as VJ René’s article examines how compulsory heterosexuality is connected to unresponse and failed emotional contact in Swinburne’s “A Wasted Vigil”.

Fundamentally, the study of emotion and affect revolves around points of connection. This issue acts as a forum (pun intended) for these connections, and the nine featured articles show a variety of facets in the ever evolving, constantly moving field of affect study. We hope that the collection of articles in this issue will have a variety of a/effects on you as you read them, and that they can in some ways *move* you too.

**Works Cited:**

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