Abstracts

1269 **Gregory B. Stone**, Animals Are from Venus, Human Beings from Mars: Averroës's Aristotle and the Rationality of Emotion in Guido Cavalcanti's "Donna me prega"

This essay provides a revisionary interpretation of one of the most important treatments of emotion (and its relation to reason) in the early period of modern European vernacular literature, Guido Cavalcanti's "Donna me prega" ("A Lady Asks Me"). According to the prevailing interpretation, the poem denigrates love as an animal power, a subhuman force that destroys our properly human rationality. Reading the poem's treatment of love in the light of Averroës's views, especially as presented in his *Long Commentary* on Aristotle's *De anima*, reveals that Cavalcanti celebrates love as paradigmatic of human reason, part and parcel of one's leading a rational and therefore human life. Love, the operation of a rational power that is mortal (not immortal) and natural (not supernatural), is for human beings the "perfect good," the full extent of our flourishing and the best for which we can hope. (GBS)

1285 **Paul Megna**, Better Living through Dread: Medieval Ascetics, Modern Philosophers, and the Long History of Existential Anxiety

Intellectual historians often credit Søren Kierkegaard as existential anxiety's prime mover. Arguing against this popular sentiment, this essay reads Kierkegaard not as the ex nihilo inventor of existential anxiety but as a modern practitioner of a deep-historical, dread-based asceticism. Examining a wide range of Middle English devotional literature alongside some canonical works of modern existentialism, it argues that Kierkegaard and the existentialists who followed him participated in a Judeo-Christian tradition of dread-based asceticism, the popularity of which had dwindled since the Middle Ages but never vanished. Following medieval ascetics, modern philosophers like Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger, and Jean-Paul Sartre cultivated and analyzed anxiety in an effort to embody authenticity. By considering premodern ascetics early existentialists and modern existentialists latter-day ascetics, the essay sees the long history of existential anxiety as an ascetic tradition built around the ethical goal of living better through dread. (PM)

1302 **Anne Schuurman**, Pity and Poetics in Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*

Modern critical reception of Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Legend of Good Women* has been unequivocal in its resistance to the pathos of the text, but, despite this resistance, the *Legend* makes us feel pity regardless of our rational intentions. To this end, the *Legend* and its prologue are thematically and structurally unified, and together they provoke an unsettling awareness that our emotions do not belong entirely to us. For Chaucer, the art of feeling pity maps onto the art of writing poetry in that both involve performed sincerity that is not insincere for being performed, a kind of authentic inauthenticity. The paradox of emotional experience is thus the paradox of poetic creation: what feels most uniquely yours is in fact learned, acquired, and imitative. (AS)

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2015.130.5.1550 Published online by Cambridge University Press

1318 **Mary A. Favret**, The Pathos of Reading
To understand what it feels like to read, we might consider what it feels like to have difficulty reading. Those who find it hard to read reveal the demands posed by a modern world that requires literacy even as it raises obstacles to reading. In this situation, the attempt to read can become pathetic: a site of suffering and reflexivity. Beginning with moments in the works of Walter Benjamin and his follower W. G. Sebald, we learn about the pains of reading as they open onto the pains of history in the cities of twentieth-century Europe. But Benjamin's and Sebald's insights on vision, pain, and history are anticipated in a series of sonnets by John Keats, written in metropolitan London in the opening decades of the nineteenth century. (MAF)

1332 **Adam Potkay**, Contested Emotions: Pity and Gratitude from the Stoics to Swift and Wordsworth
Pity and gratitude are often classified among the moral emotions: pity responds to an undeserved ill that has befallen another, while gratitude affirms as good something given to us, as well as the agent who gave it. To some philosophers, however, pity and gratitude are never or rarely appropriate. For the Stoics, pity is unnecessary suffering for the person who pities, grounded in a mistaken view of what constitutes privation; Wollstonecraft and Godwin add that in a just society, there would be no pitiably needy people. Similarly, if assistance is reconceived as something due a person as a right, then the obligation to feel or express gratitude, or to render reciprocal service, is largely eliminated. Godwin's *Enquiry concerning Political Justice* is indebted to the Stoical, pitiless, and gentle Houyhnhnms of *Gulliver's Travels*, and it prompts in turn Wordsworth's representations of interpersonal encounter in "Simon Lee," *The Ruined Cottage*, and *The Prelude*. (AP)

1347 **John Mac Kilgore**, Nat Turner and the Work of Enthusiasm
The discourse of enthusiasm in the antebellum United States played a pivotal role in cultural debates surrounding the right of black people to participate in the "age of Revolution," as Ralph Waldo Emerson called the era in 1837. This argument is explored through the textual archive of Nat Turner's Rebellion (1831). During this period, *enthusiasm* could refer to either a democratic-sublime or a fanatical-delusional passion for freedom. The term was applied to Turner pejoratively, not so much because his rebellion represented an instance of wild fanaticism to white audiences but because it represented an instance of familiar democratic revolt inadmissibly claimed by black people. Turner makes his own rhetorical claims for the meaning of *enthusiasm*: the word signifies an ardent zeal that inspires both direct dissent against slavery and acts of communication that transmit to readers a fervor for occluded black freedoms. (JMK)

1363 **Rochelle Rives**, Facing Wilde; or, Emotion's Image
Oscar Wilde's face was simultaneously maligned and celebrated by the "sciences" of physiognomy in the nineteenth century and, after the trials of 1895, in depictions that link Wilde to a pathologically expressive personality type. Personality and modern vision converge in the subject of Wilde's face, and their relation is illuminated by recent debates about affects and the emotions as well as by the theories of visual modernity advanced by Charles Baudelaire, Max Beerbohm, and E. H. Gombrich and Ernst Kris . Whereas early caricatures of Wilde invest the image with a readable psychology or interior, later depictions maintain a fiction of readability linked to a purely physiological notion of abnormal personality. (RR)

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2015.130.5.1550 Published online by Cambridge University Press

1381 **Vinay Dharwadker**, Emotion in Motion: The *Nāṭyashāstra*, Darwin, and Affect Theory

A work of classical Indian theory and practice, Bharata's *Nāṭyashāstra* offers a comprehensive account of emotion and of the production, communication, and reception of representations of it in dance, music, poetry, and theater. This essay examines remarkable points of convergence and divergence between the third-century Sanskrit text and three influential modern Euro-American accounts: Charles Darwin's mapping of involuntary expressions of emotion in human beings and animals, William James's aggregation of emotions in the stream of consciousness, and Sylvan Tomkins's atlas of primary affects that links neurobiology and cybernetics. My comparative analysis highlights the *Nāṭyashāstra*'s contributions to our understanding of the connections of emotion to cognition, consciousness, and causality; of the combinatorial constitution of emotions; and of treatments of emotion in contemporary affect theory and performance theory. The essay concludes with an exploration of Bharata's and Aristotle's models of mimesis and of their mutual differences regarding the representation of emotion in the verbal and performing arts. (VD)

1405 **Wendy Anne Lee**, The Scandal of Insensibility; or, The Bartleby Problem

Reviving Thomas Hobbes's definition of the passions as interior motions that originate action, this essay considers the case of insensibility: an absence of feeling that results in immobility. Embodying this lack of feeling is the figure of the insensible, whose signature nonresponsiveness provokes the most vehement emotions in others. Through readings of Hobbes's theories of resistance and contempt, Adam Smith's condemnation of impassivity, and Herman Melville's tale of an "unmoving" scrivener, I examine how insensibility challenges the model of emotions as causes, as accounts of how a moved body moves. Insensibility confuses distinctions between bad feeling and no feeling, agents and patients, living and dead. Finally, I argue for narrative's surprising dependence on the nonnarrative presence of the insensible, a subject that reaches back through the history of philosophy to Aristotle's unmoved mover, the first cause of the universe that makes all motion possible by not being subject to motion itself. (WAL)

1420 **Anca Parvulescu**, Kafka's Laughter: On Joy and the Kafkaesque

In a letter Franz Kafka wrote to Felice Bauer in January 1913, he describes himself as a "great laugher." Although Kafka is conventionally associated with anxiety, gloom, even terror, his laughter is joyful. (AP)

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2015.130.5.1550 Published online by Cambridge University Press