

THE “AFFECTIVE TURN” IN CONTEMPORARY HUMANITIES

Over the last decades, scholars in the humanities and social sciences have shown increasing interest in affect, emotions, and embodied cognitive responses to external stimuli. This tendency has become known as the “affective turn” and has emerged as one of the major methodological shifts in contemporary humanities alongside the “linguistic” and “cultural” turns. The affective turn is associated with the reconsideration of traditional dichotomies such as “reason / emotion”, “body / consciousness”, and “rational / sensory”, as well as with the growing scholarly focus on embodiment, emotional experience, sensory perception, and mechanisms of affective influence (see, for example, [2; 3; 5]).

In contemporary academic discourse, the notion of affect has both narrow and broad interpretations. In its narrow sense, affect is defined as a short-term intense emotional outburst accompanied by a decrease in self-control and a narrowing of consciousness. However, in modern cognitive psychology and affect studies, **affect** is increasingly understood as a generalized concept encompassing emotions, moods, attitudes, behavioural, and physiological reactions of an individual. In particular, C. E. Izard [4] includes emotional patterns, physiological drives, as well as the processes and results of their interaction within the sphere of affect. J. Gross [1, p. 212–213], in turn, incorporates attitudes, moods, and emotions into the structure of affect; emotions themselves are represented through feelings, behavioural reactions, and physiological responses.

The theoretical foundations of the affective turn can be traced to the works of H. Bergson, G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, S. Tomkins, P. Ekman, A. Damasio, and others, who emphasized the interrelation between bodily experience, emotions, and cognitive processes. Special significance has been attached to the studies of S. Tomkins, who interpreted affects as biologically determined mechanisms of emotional response, as well as to the concept of affective resonance, according to which individuals tend to experience emotional states similar to those observed in others [6;7]. This idea of affective resonance later became highly influential in studies of literary texts, media discourse, and reader-response aesthetics.

As W. Connolly observes, the affective turn emerged from the realization that the impact of social and political events on an individual may be comparable to the influence of a film on its viewers and presupposes participation in a series of acts of identification, emotional involvement, and responsive reactions such as disgust, exaltation, or cynicism [8, p. 350]. As a “new conceptual tool”, the notion of affect has become central to a number of emerging disciplines, including neuropolitics, neurogeography, and neuroaesthetics. It is therefore unsurprising that within literary and textual studies the term “affect” has likewise acquired the status of a dominant analytical category.

Within affect studies, two principal approaches to the investigation of affect have developed: *affective science* and *affect theory*. While affective science gravitates towards cognitivism, neuropsychology, and empirical methods of analysing emotional responses, affect theory actively engages with cultural studies, poststructuralism, psychoanalysis, and philosophies of embodiment [2, p. 4–5]. Despite their methodological differences, both

approaches recognize the inseparable connection between cognition and affect. Contemporary neuropsychological research demonstrates that affective states directly influence memory, attention, decision-making mechanisms, and processes of information interpretation, whereas cognitive processes themselves participate in the recognition and regulation of emotional reactions.

An important characteristic of the affective turn is its interdisciplinary nature. Today, the notion of affect is widely employed in sociology, media studies, neuroaesthetics, political theory, literary criticism, film studies, and digital humanities. Affect is increasingly regarded not merely as an individual psychological response but also as a mechanism of social interaction, cultural coding, and the construction of collective experience. In this context, the study of literary texts acquires special significance, since language, stylistic devices, and narrative structures participate in modelling the recipient's emotional experience and affective engagement.

Thus, the affective turn has contributed to a profound reconsideration of the role of emotions and bodily experience in cognition, communication, and literary reception. Contemporary affect studies demonstrate the productivity of integrating cognitive, psychological, cultural, and linguistic approaches, opening new perspectives for interdisciplinary investigations into the emotional nature of discourse and literary texts.

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