

**Die Präsenz der Gefühle. Männlichkeit und Emotion in der Moderne.**

Manuel BORUTTA, Nina VERHEYEN (eds)

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In recent years emotions and emotionality have increasingly become the focus of scholarship across many disciplines associated with cultural studies and there is already talk of an “emotional turn”. As the mapping of this field of study grows in relevance, its link to gender studies becomes more prominent and the exploration of issues of masculinity and femininity in the context of gendered emotions emerges as one of the key concerns.

This interdisciplinary volume looks specifically at the interconnection of masculinity, emotion and modernism in the German speaking countries.

As the editors outline in their introduction, they rightly reject the common misconception of a general feminisation of sentiment in the modern era, and advocate a differentiated approach which positions their analyses of the gendered treatment of emotions firmly within specific historical and institutional contexts. Accordingly, most of the book’s contributions consist of historical analyses which provide examples of the interplay between masculine gender identities and emotionality in various socio-historical contexts of the modern period. They are complemented by four overarching papers on disciplinary perspectives.

In her chapter on the philosophical background of reason and sentiment, and the influence of the “*passiones animae*” on early modern times, Catherine Newmark describes how the polarisation of ascribed gender characteristics and the coinciding dichotomisation of rationality and emotionality fostered a female gendering of sentiment in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. She argues that discourses of gender and emotionality must always be read as discourses of hierarchy, as is demonstrated in the male dominated view of women as the both rationally and emotionally inferior sex, and she emphasises the overall relevance of hegemonic patriarchy in the field of sentiment.

To what extent a narrative of male connotated control and restraint is at the centre of a history of emotions is illustrated by Andreas Reckwitz’s paper on “contested masculinity” and male

subject forms. Reckwitz identifies a number of historical cultures of affect and affect control which are in turn linked to specific processes of subjectivation. He emphasises the discontinuity in the way emotions and masculinity are negotiated in German bourgeois society between the early 19<sup>th</sup> and the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. In line with Newmark, he argues that the public and the private spheres of 19<sup>th</sup> century society became gendered in a process of antagonised differentiation, resulting in the aggressive attitude of the “masculine achiever” which replaced the empathy of homosocial bonds with a spirit of fierce competition. He then notes, however, that similar processes of affect control in both earlier and later periods were gender neutral. The 1920s saw the propagation of an unemotionalised and degendered subject and post-modern times produced the concept of the sensual and playful “emotional self” which is equally applicable to both genders.

In the second section of the book, following Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann’s insightful investigation into the bonding function of camaraderie in the exclusively male world of Masonic lodges, Elinor Forster looks at the expression of emotions in divorce proceedings in 19<sup>th</sup> century Austria, highlighting the relevance of class differences and of the urban rural divide and illustrating the performativity of socially regulated sentiment.

Nikolaus Buschmann, Daniel Morat and Thomas Kühne explore different aspects of the interplay between gender identity and emotions in the German political and military spheres from the Napoleonic Wars to 1945. Their papers analyse the workings of the affectual community of men which the military provided, and amongst other issues touch on the contrast between, on the one hand, the emotional intensity of homosocial ties in the army and of the discourse of loyalty to the Kaiser, and, on the other hand, the rationally sober politics of the democratic forces of Weimar, arguing that this disparity contributed to laying a powerful foundation for the rise of the stab-in-the-back legend.

First in the group of papers dealing with emotions and masculinity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, are Sylka Scholz’s observations of East German men gradually rejecting the ascribed public

model of emotionally restrictive masculinity, as propagated by the state, in favour of a more private and 'soft' male identity. This is followed by three studies on different constructs of masculinity in the West. Benno Gammerl shows that the alleged existence of a different emotional style amongst homosexuals, as it was proclaimed in the 1960s, soon gave way to patterns of intimacy in homosexual partnerships which converge with the increasingly differentiated emotional practices of heterosexual males. Aribert Reimann and Pascal Eitler look at the counter-cultures of the extra-parliamentary opposition and the New Age movement. Reimann acutely portrays the misogynistic, homophobic attitude of the 1968 generation as an integral part of their glorification of a violent, socially rebellious masculinity. In contrast Eitler illustrates the male New Ager's desire to achieve self-fulfilment by getting in touch with emotions that were yet again perceived to be inherently female, thus continuing the gender polarities they originally tried to overcome.

The concluding chapter of the book, Ute Frevert's historical overview of the changing interaction of emotions and gender constructions in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Germany, rounds off an interesting scholarly foray into the intrinsically linked phenomena of emotional concepts and gender constructs.

With its number of different foci and its appropriate insistence on emphasising the discontinuous developments of dealing with emotions and of defining masculinity, this collection might be said to pose almost as many questions as it manages to answer, but the different aspects that are closely examined in the individual contributions to the volume make for interesting reading and represent each in their own way valuable stepping stones on the road towards a more unified conceptualisation of the complex and hence difficult to define relationship between masculinity and emotions.

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