Story and Emotion:
A Study in Affective Narratology
PER THOMAS ANDERSEN

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A Study in Affective Narratology

Translated from the Norwegian by Marte Hult

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Affect and Aesthetics

Introduction

ABSTRACT  In this book perspectives from affective narratology are applied to study emotional structures in literary works of Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, Ibsen, Hamsun, J.P. Jacobsen, Schoenberg and Knausgaard. Based on perspectives from literary studies, philosophy, cognitive psychology, neurobiology and media studies, professor Per Thomas Andersen analyzes characters in the novels, temporal and spatial aspects of the narratives, sources of emotional impulses and different ways in which the streams of affects turn out to be as important as events in the narrative style of the chosen authors.

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KEY WORDS  affective narratology | emotion | literary studies | affective turn

In the great Russian author Fyodor Dostoevsky’s 1842 novel fragment, published in English translation as *Netochka Nezvanova*, we encounter the poverty-stricken musician Efimov, who is virtually obsessed with his own talent. He compensates for his miserable existence by delusions of grandeur that prove to be completely unfounded the day he hears a genuine virtuoso play. In his own eyes his megalomania had propelled him to the stars, and his downfall is shattering.

The real tragedy in the story is that this character has a family – a wife who is weak and ill, and a step-daughter who idolizes him and is willing to do anything for him.

We are confronted with a typical Dostoevsky configuration: on the one hand a person so caught up in his own feelings that he is enclosed within his own solipsistic reality. A rational grasp of the world slips away. The realities that surround him and all other people, including his own family, are in his view only there for his sake, and are valued exclusively according to how they contribute to his grandiose project, that of becoming a great artist. He doesn’t just neglect his family; despite the fact that it is his sick wife who supports him with her meager income from cooking dinners in the boarding house, Efimov proclaims to everyone that
she is his ruin. It is her fault that he can never realize his grand plan. He exploits little Netochka contemptibly, among other things by persuading her to steal money from her mother. The mother finally dies, and is the unambiguous victim of the story.

Netochka, on the other hand, represents the other well known position in Dostoevsky’s constellation of relationships. She is a person with an apparently unending ability for empathy towards the existence of others, a self-effacing and overly sensitive compassion for the lives of chosen pivotal people, virtually hour by hour. She shows an unbounded commitment to discovering what she can do to contribute to the well-being of the people she focuses upon. She trembles with anxiety for them, cries for them the bitterest tears, is constantly at their service, and rejoices without ambivalence when they are happy. Netochka focuses first on her step-father Efimov, and after she is taken in by a prince and princess as their daughter, she becomes especially fixated on the prince’s daughter Katja, who is about Netochka’s own age.

Both of these positions seem emotionally determined: Netochka’s position involves emotional self-effacement, while Efimov’s position implies obliteration of any ability for intimate understanding of the emotional world outside of the self. The feelings are fundamentally different, but in both cases they explain something basic about Dostoevsky’s literary world. Feelings in Dostoevsky’s world are not something that spice up or color the human universe, feelings are not something that occur in addition to existence in the world; emotions are not something that his characters “have.” Affects, feelings and emotions determine the world, how it appears, how one lives within it, and what kind of coexistence is possible with others. Feelings have people in their power. Feelings are a dominant element in Dostoevsky’s poetics.

II

Feelings and emotion have played an important role in many conceptions of thought throughout the ages, especially in ideas of art and literature. The contrast between reason and emotion remains central to widespread common perceptions, often accompanied by the idea that reason is the authority that first and foremost must be relied upon. Reason is factual, polemic and capable of distinguishing between the subjective and objective, the essential and the nonessential. Feelings do not have these characteristics, and therefore can easily mislead, lead astray and make us capricious and inconsistent. Feelings are not suitable as a basis for decisions; they obscure the facts, and it is unclear if they have informative value that
can be used for anything. This conception is consistent with the rationalism of the
father of modern philosophy, René Descartes. He believed that we gain knowl-
edge of the world by using reason, not through the senses.

But at the same time, everyone realizes that life would be poorer without feel-
ings. Maybe one could well imagine existing without grief or fear, but most would
refuse a life without joy, love, desire, or pleasure. The common-sense point of
view is that feelings have their place in existence, but preferably under the control
of reason. The opposite appears an aberration, derangement or illness. Overly sen-
sitive people often seem as if they lack the capability for living and the requisite
sturdiness, and people who exhibit excessive uncontrolled anger appear overpow-
ering, threatening or downright dangerous.

Nevertheless, most people have experienced that in apparently factual debates
the world’s best arguments may slide like water off a duck, while the ones that
directly assault the self-esteem of the discussion partner and make that person
uncomfortable, anxious or shameful, may gain ground and score, seen objectively,
undeserved points. We also know that not all of our choices, even the most impor-
tant, are based only on rational deliberation. Most of the communal activities we
are affiliated with are based upon and contain strong elements of feelings, passion
and affects. If we understand the human as primarily a social being, there is much
that suggests that feelings are just as fundamental to our existence as reason. If our
most basic need is belonging together with someone, then feelings are the most
important condition of existence; and if sense of community is a primary neces-
sity, there is certainly also reason to believe that our reason and our ideas to some
extent are guided by – or at least are influenced by – our feelings about the com-
munal activities to which we belong. Communal feelings take part in determining our col-
lective forms of judgement and our ideas about matters where a more or less cul-
tural consensus prevails.

Robert C. Solomon was among the first to ameliorate the view of human emo-
tional life with his classic The Passions. Emotions and the Meaning of Life from
1976, in which he launched an idea that has subsequently been expanded upon by
several scholars, among them Martha Nussbaum, namely that “emotions are
judgements” (Solomon 1993, viii). Since Solomon’s book, a series of philoso-
phers and psychologists have written about emotions in a manner that gives them
a more prominent position than what was customary earlier. Among others, the
British scholar Thomas Dixon mentions Ronald de Sousa, Michael Stocker, Dylan
Evans and Peter Goldie, in addition to Keith Oatley (Dixon 2003, 2). Then in
Brain assigns emotions a central place in human existence from a purely biologi-
cal point of view. In his next book, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*, Damasio writes “…the presumed opposition between emotion and reason is no longer accepted without question” (Damasio 1999, 40). He asserts that “… emotion is integral to the processes of reasoning and decision making, for worse and for better” (41). It is clear to him that “It certainly does not seem true that reason stands to gain from operating without the leverage of emotion. On the contrary, emotion probably assists reasoning, especially when it comes to personal and social matters involving risk and conflict” (41–42). He certainly admits that “emotional upheavals can lead to irrational decisions” but in *toto* he insists that “Well-targeted and well-deployed emotion seems to be a support system without which the edifice of reason cannot operate properly”. (42)

III

In the world of art, feeling and affects have almost always been central in reflections over what music, pictures or fictional works “do” to us. Ever since the dawn of Romanticism in Europe, as Robert Wilkinson writes in his article “Art, Emotion and Expression,” it “has been held that art can be defined in terms of emotional expression.” There is the widespread conception that good art is usually created with an origin in “an emotional crisis of the artist” (Wilkinson 1992, 179). It is also customary to think that what a work of art first and foremost evokes in the recipient are diverse feelings. Feelings do not play the same role in all theories about art, but they have an important place, and they are not tied specifically to the art theories of Romanticism.

The foundations of the central conceptions regarding emotion and art were established by Pythagoras (c. 570 – c. 495 B.C.E). Most of his philosophy is known only in fragmentary transmissions, but it is nevertheless clear that his theories were constructed on speculative numerology with great metaphysical superstructures. He discovered that musical intervals were determined by mathematical proportions, which he then extrapolated to the entire universe, establishing the concept of *the Harmony of the Spheres*. He also believed that these numerical relationships could be transferred to values in human life; that is, he established the foundation for the concept of musical elements having ethical value, and prepared the foundation for the aesthetics of both Plato and Aristotle. Plato’s theory was that there was an actual mechanical relationship between types of scales and emotions, and on that basis he banished Ionic and Lydian modes as soft and insipid. They were only suitable for drinking songs. The Mixolydian mode also had to be
completely disregarded. Plato writes about this in *The Republic*, where he has Socrates say:

“I don’t know the modes,” I said. “Just leave that mode which would appropriately imitate the sounds and accents of a man who is courageous in warlike deeds and every violent work, and who in failure or when going to face wounds or death or falling into some other disaster, in the face of all these things stands up firmly and patiently against chance. And, again, leave another mode for a man who performs a peaceful deed, one that is not violent but voluntary, either persuading someone of something and making a request – whether a god by prayer or a human being by instruction and exhortation – or, on the contrary, holding himself in check for someone else who makes a request or instructs him or persuades him to change, and as a result acting intelligently, not behaving arrogantly, but in all these things acting moderately and in measure and being content with the consequences. These two modes – a violent one and a voluntary one, which will produce the finest imitation of the sounds of unfortunate and fortunate, moderate and courageous men – leave these.” (Plato, 77–78)

Glaucon, Socrates’ conversant in the dialogue, informs Socrates that the two modes are the Dorian and the Phrygian. Accordingly, there is a direct connection between aesthetics and ethics, and concrete artistic expressions presuppose the evocation of specific emotions and attitudes. Of course, such an aesthetic makes art both useful and dangerous, an effective instrument in the ethical and political education of the state, but at the same time a threatening force if one “plays it wrong” – that is to say if one uses the wrong scale.

The Doctrine of Ethos and musical theory of antiquity were important presuppositions for *Affektenlehre*, The Doctrine of the Affections, of the Baroque period. Here the conception of a direct relationship between aesthetic agents and definite affects was pursued and continued. For example, the composer, singer and conductor Johan Mattheson wrote a work entitled *Der vollkommene Kapellmeister* (1739), wherein such a doctrine was developed.¹ Several others contributed with different variants of the doctrine; Andreas Werkmeister, for instance, and towards the end of the Baroque period this concept was universally accepted. Carl Philip Emanuel Bach and the so-called Mannheim School were important exponents of the doctrine.² It was held quite conclusively that a composer or musician could evoke spe-

¹ The presentation here is constructed upon Finn Benestad 1976. [Quotations from Johann Mattheson are translated from Benestad’s text: *Musikk og tanke. Hovedretninger i musikkestetikkens historie fra antikken til vår egen tid.*]
pecific emotions in the listener by utilizing unequal melodic intervals or by playing in specific keys. Large intervals were to evoke joy, for example, while small intervals brought about sadness. The doctrine was developed in such detail by some composers and music theorists that it resembled the teachings of stylistic devices in the linguistic rhetorical tradition. G Major was a light and optimistic tonality, D Major was powerful and energetic, while E Flat was masculine and heroic.

Johann Mattheson referred directly to the philosopher René Descartes, who about a hundred years earlier had occupied himself with questions about both music theory and human affects, respectively, in *Musicae Compendium* (1618, printed 1650) and in *Les passions de l’âme* (1649). The reason that Mattheson and others were inspired by Descartes, was, as Mattheson wrote “For Descartes, affects were determined physiologically, and there was no reason that one could not control the affects by simultaneously controlling the means that had led to the physiological reaction” (Benestad, 134). According to Mattheson, Descartes believed that different rhythms could influence the spiritual life of a person and encourage specific moral qualities. In contrast to what we are accustomed to associate with musical qualities after the epoch of Romanticism, it appears that music in Mattheson’s conception had the function of controlling feelings and guiding mankind into the realm of reason. In any case, this is how he construes Descartes, to whom he refers with great respect:

> As a logician it was essential for Descartes to point out that reason was superior to all passions and feelings, and as long as reason managed to prevail, man could not be led on the wrong track by arbitrary flights of imagination. The greatest mission of music was as an agent for advancing the intellectual study of science’s science, that is – philosophy. (ibid. 135)

The psychophysical conception was accordingly a frame of comprehension that above all was about control and instruction, similar to Plato’s. It was not strange, therefore, that *Affektenlehre* was used normatively. For example, it was an accepted rule that a musical composition could contain only one affect. Intermixed feelings had no place in music, and it is implicit that *Affektenlehre* was not understood expressionistically. What was expressed in music was not the composer or musician’s individualized feelings; it was a matter of evoking universal human affects. Descartes operated with six fundamental emotions from which all others were derived: wonder, love, hate, desire, joy and sorrow.

2. However, Albert Schweitzer in his famous book about Johann Sebastian Bach, Carl Philip’s father, meant that the Master himself could be understood through *Affektenlehre*. 
IV

The liberation of individual feelings came with Romanticism. It hardly happened because people suddenly became more sentimental, pathetic or affected. It was rather the case of a development that took place in company with an ideological shift in which the view of the human self and even the conception of reality changed. Historians of ideas work with concepts such as “the boundless self.” A principle point is that the human being is something more than, perhaps also something other than, reason and that this human self incorporates that which lies outside the self, instead of being included in it or being effaced from it. The self expands its borders and contains the world. This conception of the self is also related to a new conceptualization of nature.

Romanticism’s philosophy of nature marks a clear break with Rationalism and all kinds of mechanical notions of nature. In the seventeenth century, Thomas Hobbes, among others, had advanced the point of view that nature’s clock advanced of its own accord, nature followed its own inherent laws. By the eighteenth century, many had adopted a “clockwork universe theory” for their view of nature and the universe. There was, per se, a place for a creator behind it all, who had originally wound the clock up, but just in the first instance. Thereafter it ticked away by itself. Even Aristotle had said, “God doesn’t need any friends,” and to the extent that the rationalists of the eighteenth century imagined a deity, it was a withdrawn authority that had entrusted creation to its own devices, that is, to the laws of nature.

In Romanticism we encounter another mentality. Divinity or the spirit are not something other than, or withdrawn, in relationship to our universe. Quite the contrary. The spirit is in nature, in the universe, in creation, in the grass, in the air and the light; and yes, as in Wergeland, “Heaven” is in “a moss blossom.”3 In summary: The idea of a completed work of creation is set against the concept of the eternal and unfinished creation. And against the conception of a transcendent or withdrawn deity, stands Romanticism with its conceptualization of an immanent spirit. That is, a spirit that is present here and now, not as in the Middle Ages when God could only reach mankind through vehicles of divine grace, communion and the clergy. Indeed the spirit is in nature, in the universe, even in our own bodies.

But even if the divine spirit is present here, it is nevertheless “hidden” to everyday cognition and the cognizance of common sense. Not only the conception of an ever present spirit, but also the idea of a hidden God belong to mysticism’s traditions of ideas. That is why the hidden truth requires another form of gaining

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3. From Henrik Wergeland’s 1833 poem “Til en Gran” [To a Spruce].
understanding than rationalism’s perception of reason. “Closing them [intuitions] out gives him with the Hoof the choicest bait” says the Button-Molder in Peer Gynt (Ibsen 1980, 196). Accordingly, the highest form of obtaining insight is a feeling, intuition, the inchoate idea. The present but hidden deity in existence can manifest itself in an illumination, in a mystical vision, most often just as an epiphanic flash, an extraordinary momentary experience.

And also in art. Romanticism’s artist was comprehended as a genius with a privileged eye; the romantic poet was a seer who could perceive the concealed, as a mystic. He could see the unity in the many, the connections in existence. The literary work, especially poetry, became a form of gaining understanding and insight; it became the very highest form of comprehension. It is important to be reminded of this theoretical and epistemological aspect of Romanticism’s mode of thinking since we so often read that Romanticism represents the longing for an escape from reality and a flight into a world of dreams. That is Realism’s judgement of Romanticism, and of course it can be relevant. But it hardly corresponds to the self-understanding of the Romanticists themselves. The cultivation of an obscure hunch, the mysteriousness of night’s aura, the always restless striving and yearning for the horizon beyond the visible – these are all expressions of an endeavor that is based in epistemology. Rationalism before and Realism afterwards operated with other concepts of reality, and their forms for understanding had to correspond with their conceptualizations of reality. The romanticist had his understanding of reality – and a form of understanding that matched it: Romanticism’s longing was no escape, but an effort at comprehension.

What the cognition of Romanticism gave insight into was the infinite diversity and interconnections of existence, its differences and its unity. Nature and spirit are one. We are not surrounded by dead and finite matter and do not live in an uninspired physicality. We exist in a living nature that consists of spirit and matter in fusions of dissimilarity. This way of thinking implies not just that spirit is in nature, but that nature is the spirit’s objectification; that is, an expression for the essence of the spirit. Not all of Romanticism’s natural philosophy was Christian, and not all Christian Romanticism was theologically orthodox. In the Christian variant, however, the diversity in creation was regarded as an expression of God’s own manifold being, and unity was expressive of the oneness of God. The creation was God’s great work of art. The analogy of God as creator and human as artist is found as early as in Friedrich Schiller, and in this artistic metaphor lies another element that is important in understanding Romanticism’s image of the artist. The art work of the romantic artist is an expression of his personality in the same way that the creation is an expression of God’s being.
Such a theory of manifestation likely seems foreign today because of its analogy with the divine. Nevertheless, this conception has exerted an enormous influence on the view of art in modern times. The idea of a unique, original personality who expresses himself through his art work is deep-seated even in the conceptions of art in our own day. And perhaps, even if we do not believe in intuition or believe art as the highest form of perception, we still fasten upon ideas about the artist as a person with a kind of privileged eye that can see something other than the rest of us.

Romanticism’s nature-philosophy and its expressive aesthetics involved a completely new emphasis on the distinguishing emotional quality of the self and the position of feelings in art. Instead of reflecting an outer reality, art should now express the artist’s inner life, which, of course, did not just consist of thoughts and rational deliberations, but just as much of feelings. Feelings and the force of feelings became almost a guaranty that an artwork was good. William Wordsworth expressed it this way in his famous preface to Lyrical Ballads, with Other Poems:

> For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; but though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached, were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility had also thought long and deeply.

(Wordsworth 1800, n.p.)

The artist is not just anybody, but an exceptional person with deep thoughts, and the work of art is marked by spontaneity and strong emotions.

The new examination of emotional expression in art had already begun earlier, in movements of Pre-Romanticism, in trends of Sturm und Drang, in what has been called the expressive style, the “romanticism of the enlightenment,” the Mannheim School, or, as Lessing expressed it, “Empfindsamkeit” in art. These trends found expression both in literature and in music. One source of inspiration was Goethe’s Die Leiden des Jungen Werthers, where it is recounted how music causes the hero to cry (Goethe 1962, 99). The dynamic relationship between affects, and the transition between one affect and another in developing outbursts found its place in the art work, while in the Baroque period, it had been a rule that only one affect could be represented in each musical composition. These circumstances had a very direct and concrete meaning for experimentation of emotional expression in music, and on musical dynamics on the whole. Sudden changes between loud and soft (forte and piano) were exploited, likewise the contrast
between fast and slow tempi. A small stylistic detail also attained great meaning in music history, namely a specific method of executing a musical suspension, a detail that received the designation “Mannheim sigh.” A sigh is also the expression of an emotional event. In addition, advances in using musical sequences evolved. Sequencing was a well-known technique from the Baroque: a small musical motif was restated, but transposed to a new pitch level. In the Baroque, the technique was considered a simple “architectural” method of musical composition. Sequencing became “affected” in Romanticism, that is, the technique was used to shape an emotional rise in tension. The technique was developed to perfection in late Romanticism, and can be experienced with full effect in, for example, the first movement of Rachmaninoff’s famous third piano concerto. But perhaps the most important musical effect that was invented by the expressive schools of Pre-Romanticism was nevertheless the effects of crescendo and diminuendo, that is, the gradual increase or gradual decrease in the volume during musical phrases. On wind and string instruments this effect can also be produced while playing the same tone. This represents a revolutionary rupture with the Baroque “terraced dynamics” in which the degree of intensity could only be altered in between clearly bounded musical phrases. It is said that the first time an audience experienced crescendo effects, they found themselves suddenly standing in the concert hall, lifted up by the dynamic effect, subsequently to gasp breathlessly for air when the diminuendo effect was used. Crescendo and diminuendo became such important elements in romantic music that they shaped entirely new methods of composition. As an example, the famous third movement in Johannes Brahms’ third symphony would be totally without the strong emotional effect it has if it were performed without the emphasis on such dynamics. The relatively short musical phrases of the work’s main theme are combined with crescendo and diminuendo in such a way that the music acquires a “breath” that resembles a sigh, a gasp, or powerfully emotional, deep breaths, followed by a breath of relaxation.

V

In *Emotions. A Brief History* (2004), professor of cognitive psychology Keith Oatley claims that the basic conception for working with the distinctive affective qualities of being human is emotion. The concept of “affect,” which, according to Oatley, has its root in the early seventeenth century, has also been revitalized, but in general emotion is recognized as the overall term for the “family” of phenomena that characterizes mankind’s emotional existence. As a point of departure, Oatley distinguishes between reactive emotions, moods, sentiments and prefer-
The duration of feelings and what evokes them are important distinctive features.

Reactive emotions are evoked suddenly when something unexpected occurs. That is, something happens that does not have a place in our “assumed world.” “Emotions give life its urgency,” Oatley writes (4). A sudden, unexpected event evokes a reaction that is of both a cognitive and physical nature. Reactive emotions indicate alteration, and they most often imply a preparedness for action. They are tied to consciousness in the sense that our “assumed world” is experience- and knowledge-based. Moods last longer, for many hours or days. In contrast to reactive emotions which have clear causes, moods can be due to circumstances that are hidden or unknown. Sadness, joyfulness or irritability can surround our existence and set a frame of mind for an attitude towards life that is forceful, but that does not always have a concrete, obvious cause. Sentiments can last for many years, and can, for example, determine our relationships with other people for long periods or a lifetime. Love would be an obvious example – while falling in love would rather classify as a reactive emotion. Reactive emotions bring about a change in commitment, while sentiment is an indication of a continuing commitment. Preferences are a type of feeling that is defined in quite a vague way: “one may think of it as a silent emotion waiting for an opportunity to express itself in a choice we make” (4).

One of the conspicuous characteristics of Dostoevsky’s character portrayals is the density of intense emotions that break out almost eruptively in an individual’s psyche. People tremble in fear, rant and rave and wring their hands, cry and are overcome with joy or despair. These are feelings of an acute character that give life urgency, but that also have the hallmark of coming in rapid order and high tempo, and barely give the characters any breathers in a neutral emotional state. This causes

4. It is appropriate to mention here that literature about what we today call emotions also has a long history preceding the tradition in the field of psychology. According to Thomas Dixon in From Passions to Emotions. The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category (2003), not just a philosophical but also a theological literature about human emotional life has existed since early times, and it was both sophistical and conceptually subtle. Concepts such as affect and passion played an important role in this literature. Augustine, one of the fathers of the Christian church, was inspired by Cicero and his notion of four fundamental emotions: cupiditas (desire), timor (fear), laetitia (joy), and tristitia (sorrow). Aquinas developed these viewpoints further and ended up with eleven passions (Dixon 2003, 40–43). According to Dixon, it is anachronistic to use the concept of emotions in connection with this older literature about human passions. It also seems to be a dubious assertion when Oatley writes that the concept of affect has its origin in the seventeenth century. Dixon’s book is a timely reminder that there exists a good deal of literature about and knowledge of human feelings beyond current scientific disciplines. The field of creative literature is one such area, which the studies in this book lend a hand in legitimating.
their emotional lives to appear not just as a series of emotional experiences, but as personality characteristics. It often appears that different people pass through the same type of feelings time and again – as the case is with Netochka and her stepfather. The emotional pattern of progression looks like what the psychologists Roger Schank and Robert Abelson have called *scripts* (Schank and Abelson 1977). A *script* appears as a narrative pattern or a sequence of events which is repeated in people’s lives. Sylvan Tomkins elaborated on the idea of scripts towards the concept of emotionally based *life-scripts* (Tomkins 1979). In the first place, Tomkins believed that emotions are the most important motivating factor for behavior. He claimed, secondly, that when an emotion is developing, a whole collection of processes are recruited in the brain and body in order to bring about responses that compose an entire entity. In the third place, Tomkins claimed that people act based on scripts to solve particular emotional problems in their lives. As soon as a person is encased within a *script*, it becomes a principal component of the personality, and the entire sequence of reactions can be triggered by any individual element in the *script*. Many of Dostoevsky’s central literary characters appear to be constructed, not just as especially sensitive people, but as persons with powerful emotional *life-scripts*. In this way a close connection between short lasting and possibly reactive *emotions* and the more long-lasting *sentiments* or *preferences* comes into existence.

VI

One day about 150 years ago, Charles Darwin took a walk to the zoo and sat down close to a glass cage that contained a poisonous snake. He had only one thought in mind: He would do everything he could to avoid recoiling if the snake should strike at him. He knew very well that the snake would not be capable of breaking the glass cage. In other words, he knew that the experiment was completely safe. What happened? The snake struck towards him and Darwin jumped back. Darwin’s explanation was that the snake’s attack aroused emotional reactions that had been established in the human brain at an earlier stage of evolution. It was a matter of responses that at one time had contributed to insure the survival of the species. The intelligence that informed Darwin that the experiment was safe belonged to a later stage of development. The emotional reaction was therefore primeval in relationship to reason, and set reason aside completely automatically. Darwin related his experiment in *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872), and this work is considered by many to be the beginning of modern scientific research into human emotion. In other words, scientific research on emotion began about a hundred years later than the great exploration of feelings in the art of Romanticism.
Both Keith Oatley and Martha Nussbaum refer to the Stoics and Epicureans in their historical mooring of theories about human emotions (Oatley 2004, 41ff.; Nussbaum 2001, 22ff.). The Stoics were already aware that an emotion consisted of two movements; the first was involuntary, unconsidered, physical – like Darwin’s reaction to the snake. The other was more considered, conscious and was concerned with what could be done with the emotion that had been mobilized. For the Stoics, this was the real emotion, maintains Oatley, and it was possible to have control over it. This was namely the goal of the Stoics, of course; to have full control over desires and feelings.

The conception of the two components of emotions can be traced from the Stoics forward to modern research on the brain. Darwin claimed that evolution had led to the addition of new layers of neurons in the brain, while the disappearance of earlier strata was rare. In the 1990s Paul MacLean asserted that the brain had developed in three main phases that corresponded with developments in the activities of mammals.5 The first phase corresponds to the interior and oldest part of the brain and is called the corpus striatum. The impulse to establish a domicile, patrol and defend a territory, establish social groups, greet, mate and migrate are found in this part of the brain. The next layer in the brain is called the limbic system, and is regarded as the seat of the emotions. It attends to three specific functions: mothers’ care of offspring, who on their side feel attachment to the mother, communication between individuals by means of vocal signals, and rough and tumble play, especially among younger individuals. The third stage of development took place over a period of about six million years, and saw to it that human beings separated from their “ancestors.” This new layer in the brain is called the neocortex, often only cortex. In the human, it constitutes about 80% of the volume of the brain. One of its principal functions is to increase our social capacity, so that we not only socialize with others as a group, but also can recognize and establish relationships with individuals. With new technological tools for research of the brain, a part of the limbic system called the amygdala was discovered. The neural scientist Joseph LeDoux has argued that the amygdala has a “low road” by means of which it communicates with the rest of the brain and the body. This “low road” can send rapid signals of approaching danger without going through conscious analysis. The conscious deliberation and analysis of stimuli takes a much longer time, and forms the brain’s “high road” which is the cortical pathway (LeDoux 1996, 161ff.). In many ways, these two “roads” correspond to the two movements or components of the emotions as they were discussed as early as the Stoics. Mod-

5. See MacLean 1990 and MacLean in Lewis and Haviland-Jones 1993, 67ff. The following summary of MacLean’s three phases is condensed and paraphrased from Oatley, 64–65.
ern cognitive psychology also operates with two such components of emotions. They often follow each other in two phases. The first functions as a type of alarm, and prepares the body, without really giving very much information. The other component includes evaluation and understanding, as one tries to understand the emotion and decide what actions should be taken.

VII

A comparable division plays a fundamental role for Brian Massumi, who is often referred to in connection with the so-called “affective turn.” According to Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth in *The Affect Theory Reader*, this trend within modern theory has its stimulus in two influential essays from 1995, Brian Massumi’s “The Autonomy of Affect” and Eve Sedgwick and Adam Frank’s “Shame in the Cybernetic Fold” (Gregg and Seigworth 2010, 5). Patricia T. Clough, who appears to have coined the term “the affective turn,” refers especially to Massumi, who is a professor of communications and has concerned himself particularly with perceptual reactions in connection with new media and new technology. Despite Keith Oatley’s assertion that there is converging consensus that emotions are the basic concept within psychological scientific literature, Massumi advances the viewpoint that one must make a sharp division between “emotions” and “affects.” In the aforementioned influential essay from 1995, Massumi differentiates between *qualities* and *intensity* in connection with emotional experiences. The point seems to be that there is no accordance between our evaluations of qualities and our measurable senses’ intensity. The physical reactions that can be measured by heartbeats, breathing and skin live their own lives. Here Massumi uses the concept of affect. Emotions are combined with cognition; they are semantically and semiotically subject to qualification, which means they have conventional contents. I understand this division as largely in agreement with the psychologists’ distinction between the “low road” and the “high road.” However, Massumi seems to put much more emphasis on the distinction than do the psychologists. While the psychologists claim that the spontaneous *amygdala* reactions are quite quickly dealt with in the cortex, and gain their interpretation with attendant instructions for action, Massumi seems to believe that affects are autonomous and have a subversive potential. He realizes that “Affects is most often used loosely as a synonym for emotion.” However he himself claims that “emotion and affect – if affect is intensity – follow different logics and pertain to different orders” (Massumi 2002, 27). He inserts affects into a philosophical tradition from Spinoza, Bergson and Deleuze, and appears to mean that because affects are of such short duration,
they represent “something that happens too quickly to have happened” (30). In reality, affects are virtual. They contain potential. Affects will be consciously registered true enough, but, with reference to Bergson, Massumi asserts that consciousness is “subtractive and inhibitive” (31). Affects are fundamentally physical. They are characterized by an “irreducibly bodily and autonomic nature…” and “… affect is unqualified. As such, it is not ownable or recognizable and is thus resistant to critique” (28). As far as I can see, Massumi has presented interesting analyses of perceptual encounters with new media, and has included the especially transitory perceptual stimuli we can experience. He associates them with “late-capitalist, image- and information-based economies” and specifies:

Think interruption. Think of the fast cuts of the video clip or the too-cool TV commercial. Think of the cuts from TV programming commercials. Think of the cuts across programming and commercials achievable through zapping. Think of the distractedness of television viewing, the constant cuts from the screen to its immediate surroundings, to the viewing context where other actions are performed in fits and starts as attention flits. Think of the joyously incongruent juxtapositions of surfing the internet. (42)

A point here is that one can be influenced by such transitory, perhaps even imperceptible physical stimuli almost without being consciously aware of it. In the decadence literature before the turn of the twentieth century, many authors were preoccupied by so-called “fractional feelings.” In Scandinavian literature, writers such as Knut Hamsun and Ola Hansson were engaged with how such miniature, often incidental sensory stimuli could undermine “greater” feelings and consciously chosen values. Perhaps Massumi could be positioned within such a tradition.

However, it is evident that he also proceeds normatively in his categories. Affects are what are interesting to him, emotions are associated with an obsolete concept of the individual, (ushered in by deconstructionism), and is dismissed from the field of interest. Emotions are semantically and semiotically subject to qualification, that is, they have a conventional content. Nevertheless, it is unclear how “autonomous” affects really are in Massumi’s judgement. That is, he nevertheless contemplates them as contextually dependent: “The body doesn’t just absorb pulses or discrete stimulations; it infolds contexts, it infolds volitions and cognitions that are nothing if not situated” (30). Affects are also in a certain sense tied to sociality; they are asocial but not prosocial, claims Massumi. The field of research he wants to inaugurate is
…not prosocial. It is *open-endedly social*. It is social in a manner “prior to” the separating out of individuals and the identifiable groupings that they end up boxing themselves into (positions in gridlock). A sociality without determinate borders: “pure” sociality. (9)

Affects can contain social elements and be tied to contexts whereby “…the *trace* of past actions, including a trace of their contents, were conserved in the brain and in the flesh, but out of mind and out of body…” (30). In my judgement, it is difficult to maintain Massumi’s underlying division between affects and emotions based on the specifications he cites. It is difficult to see how affects can be both autonomous and tied to context. And further, it is not easy to see that they can be “unqualified, “not ownable” and “not . . . recognizable” while they simultaneously contain “the *trace* of past actions, including a trace of their contexts.” It appears that Massumi is driven more by ideological fear of an old-fashioned concept of the individual than by concepts about human feelings and reactions that are capable of verification. It also appears that many of those who have let themselves be inspired by the affective turn have found it difficult to attend to Massumi’s distinction in analytical work. In a certain sense, it is Massumi who comes to represent an antiquated concept of the individual in the sense that he operates with a division between the semantic qualifiable that exists in consciousness, and the physical. This division, which resembles the division between reason and feelings, seems more and more to appear as an abandoned position. As mentioned, Antonio Damasio claims such a viewpoint. This fundamental division is what he calls *Descartes’ error* in his famous book of the same name. In *The Feeling of What Happens*, Damasio primarily seeks to get on the track of consciousness. And Damasio’s perspective is plainly biological, that is to say, physical. Consciousness as well as emotions are within the organism, in the body. It is nothing other than body.

VIII

Damasio approaches consciousness as well as emotions on a neuro-biological basis. As mentioned, he believes that emotions have great meaning for rational thought. However, he has a different method of categorizing emotions than has the cognitive psychologist Oatley. Damasio works with the traditional primary or universal emotions: happiness, sadness, fear, anger, surprise and disgust. Then he utilizes secondary or social emotions such as embarrassment, jealousy, shame and pride. In addition, he launches an original concept, background emotions, as, for example, feeling well or unwell, calm or tense. We can often note background
emotions in each other without a word being said about a state of mind. We notice
textured emotions through subtle details in body language, the form and speed
of movements, minimal motions in muscles of the eye or facial expressions. Back-
textured emotions are often provoked by inner factors, asserts Damasio and can, for
example, be caused by prolonged processes of mental conflict. Background emo-
tions are highly persevering and can survive neurological illnesses.

Another division that is important for Damasio is the distinction between emo-
tion and feeling. One first experiences a feeling when one knows one has it, that
is, when one becomes aware of it. Other organisms besides humans have emo-
tions, and they cause the organism to enact a change, even if most organisms are
not aware that they are experiencing a certain emotion. At a level below the emo-
tions, we find what Damasio calls basic life regulation, that is, simple patterns of
reactions that encompass regulation of metabolism and reflexes. It is a matter of
an innate survival kit. For organisms who are equipped to notice emotions, those
who have consciousness and can realize that they have a feeling, emotions have a
stronger regulating effect. Consciousness “allows emotion to permeate the
thought process through the agency of feeling” says Damasio (1999, 56). Accord-
ingly, it is clear to Damasio that organisms that do not have consciousness also
have emotions, but probably not feelings. People too can have emotions that do
not become feelings, if I have understood Damasio correctly. But this is not the
same as postulated by Massumi, that the one is physical and the other is not. It is
also not the case that the focus is directed at something preconscious. On the con-
trary, for Damasio feelings are one of the human organism’s most important and
most advanced systems of homeostasis.

Damasio actually quite frequently uses literary references when he is explaining
his meaning. But when he does this, a lack of clarity often arises with regard to
who is experiencing the feelings: the literary characters, the reader or the author.
It is also a little unclear how his use of literary examples should be understood, to
what extent they are illustrations of scholarly points on a level with metaphor,
which Damasio also often uses, or if he means that they actually contain scientific
truths. One ambiguity consists in Damasio initially categorically insisting that
emotions can be induced by two factors, “objects” in the external world, or mem-
ories that come from within.

Emotions occur in one of two types of circumstances. The first type of circum-
stance takes place when the organism processes certain objects or situations
with one of its sensory devices – for instance, when the organism takes in the
sight of a familiar face or place. The second type of circumstance occurs when
the mind of an organism conjures up from memory certain objects and situations and represents them as images in the thought process – for instance, remembering the face of a friend and the fact she has just died. (56)

The emotions that Damasio refers to in literary works, have an unclear status as inducers, at least if we comprehend them as works to be read. Certainly we understand drama and film directly through our senses, but written works are comprehended via conceptions and inner images. It is unclear to me in what way literature is an emotional inducer in Damasio’s universe. Actually I think it is somewhat unclear how he understands dreams as inducers of emotions also.

What I find lacking in Damasio is that he does not pursue the two elements he makes concessions to, namely individual and cultural differences. He clearly admits that they are there, but as far as I can see, he has little to say about them. They fall completely outside of his biological focus. He draws his examples and scientific instances explicitly from patients with different forms of physical brain damage. He apparently is not interested in those variations caused by psychological peculiarities, neuroses or psychoses. The same is true of cultural differences and historical movements in the repertoire of feelings. One could entertain the misgiving that this makes it a bit easier for him to hold so steadfastly to his neurobiological and theoretically developmental point of departure.

IX

One theoretician who, similar to Brian Massumi, concerns herself with feelings more through philosophical considerations than with those from psychology, and definitively more from cultural theory than biology, is Martha Nussbaum. Nussbaum is absorbed by “the intelligence of emotions.” Emotions are not considered just as “animal energies or impulses that have no connection with our thoughts, imaginings, and appraisals” but as “intelligent responses to perception of value” (Nussbaum 2001, 1). On this basis, it has been a central concern for Nussbaum to give emotions a place in her ethical thinking. This was already a main point in Love’s Knowledge. Essays on Philosophy and Literature from 1990. She argued for “ethical value of the emotions,” with, among others, references to the philosophy of Antiquity, including Aristotle and the Stoics. She continues this point of view in the expansive volume Upheavals of Thought. The Intelligence of Emotions from 2001. In Political Emotions (2013) she transfers her viewpoints to the political arena too, and asserts that emotional education of the general populace is needed to contribute in expanding the ability to empathize beyond those closest to
us. In *Love’s Knowledge*, she introduced the concept of *narrative emotions* in an analysis of Beckett’s *Molloy* trilogy:

…emotions are not feelings that well up in some natural and untutored way from our natural selves, that they are, in fact, not personal or natural at all, that they are, instead, contrivances, social constructs. We learn how to feel, and we learn our emotional repertoire. We learn emotions in the same way that we learn our beliefs – from our society.

(Nussbaum 1990, 287)

But in contrast to much of our understanding, we do not learn our emotions by means of argumentative assertions about the world. We learn them above all through stories, claims Nussbaum. It is a matter of cultural narratives that shape dissimilar narrative emotions in different parts of the world and in different places. Place shapes emotional geographies. The feeling of individual freedom has a strong position in our part of the world. The collective sense of honor is stronger in Muslim areas of the world. Such emotional geographies are not static; they change, but usually they change slowly. The collective sense of honor was also much more important than feelings of individual freedom in our part of the world during early Norse times.

Literature occupies an ambiguous position in such cultural narratives. On the one hand, there is no doubt that literature takes part in educating, developing and internalizing fundamental narrative emotions. The story of Tristan and Isolde is both an expression of, and has been a part of shaping, the grand idea of passionate love in the western world. The literature of Søren Kierkegaard and Henrik Ibsen has contributed in establishing and evaluating a set of Nordic narrative emotions: strong individualism, an enormous passion for truth – with accompanying hypocrisy. But literature’s narratives do not just take part in creating narrative emotions; they show, on the other hand, how cultural stories appear oppressive, restrictive and reactionary. They display the individual captured in dead cultural narratives or limited emotional space. They depict lives that are destroyed by attempting to adjust to fixed narrative emotions. Literature offers resistance, is revealing, inspires rebellion, and sets established narrative emotions in motion. In a Norwegian context, it is enough to refer to all the stories of the emotional darkening of the mind, sexuality and aptitude for life due to Pietism, from Arne Garborg, via Hans Jæger and Jens Bjørneboe to Kjell Askildsen. Martha Nussbaum’s example of the relationship between literature and narrative emotions is Samuel Beckett’s
so-called French trilogy *Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*, in which she shows how the novels reflect and struggle with narrative emotions in which feelings of love are methodically linked together with feelings of guilt. In summary: Literature gives us both the possibility to study narrative emotions we are embedded within, and to reflect about them and develop critical attitudes towards them. Narrative emotions concerning gender and gender roles are probably amongst the cultural narratives that have slowly changed the most drastically in our part of the world in the last forty years. Literature has played a decisive role.

In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004), Sara Ahmed writes, in conformity with Nussbaum, about emotions from a cultural and political perspective, but her fundamental ideological position is different from Nussbaum’s. Ahmed’s point of departure is Marxist and psychoanalytical, and she adopts a feminist perspective. Nussbaum is likely more of a liberal humanist. Nevertheless, they both stress that emotions cannot be studied meaningfully through a one-sided perspective of individual orientation. Ahmed takes a position critical of what she calls the psychologizing of emotions, and asserts that “emotions should not be regarded as psychological states, but as social and cultural practices.” She refers to Emil Durkheim, and writes that for him, “emotion is not what comes from the individual body, but is what holds or binds the social body together” (Ahmed 2015, 9). Ahmed contends that most of what has been written about emotions is based on what she calls an inside-out perspective. For her part, she advocates for an outside-in perspective. In principle, this resembles Nussbaum’s idea of narrative emotions. Grounded in a cultural and political perspective, Ahmed deals with emotions such as grief, hate, fear, contempt, shame and several other fundamental emotions.

In the first scene of Norwegian literature’s most important quintessential text, Henrik Ibsen’s *Peer Gynt*, we encounter the main character in conversation with his mother, Aase. She begins with the famous words “Peer, you’re lying!” This is followed by a dialogue in which Peer lies through his teeth about his perilous trip up in the mountains. She is angry and scolds him because he is lying. But at the most dramatic part of his tall tale, when he falls from the cliff’s edge and down towards the water, her maternal instinct takes over, and she expresses concern and anxiety for him. She vacillates back and forth between anger and concern – until she finally recognizes the entire tall tale as an old local legend. This same vacillation between different feelings is repeated several times in the
drama’s portrayal of mother Aase. What Ibsen depicts is a very central aspect of the human mind: ambivalence. One can be ambivalent in many ways, and most people experience this quite often. We can be in doubt about what we should believe, what we think, and we can vacillate back and forth between different alternatives. We experience dilemmas of choice. But above all, we experience dissimilar feelings struggling within us simultaneously. Reading theoretical literature about emotions, we have seen that it is customary to work with different fundamental emotions in addition to several additional secondary emotions. They are often enumerated, and many people believe that there are some emotions that are universal. But when all is said and done, it is plain that in the individual’s psychological life, not all the feelings we have are simple or unambiguous. We often vacillate back and forth between different, perhaps conflicting feelings about the same person or a single matter. We can also be frustrated by conflicting feelings at the same time. The love/hate paradigm of Strindberg is a famous literary example. Sigmund Freud was concerned with ambivalent emotions, also by love/hate relationships and by attraction and revulsion at the same time, desire and repulsion. Many psychologists who have written about grief know very well that it also can be an ambivalent feeling. While grieving at the loss of the departed, one can also feel an underlying anger at being “abandoned,” even though the dying party did not do so on purpose. To be angry with someone you miss is, in reality, a widespread feeling in more banal situations also. Children react with anger against parents who have traveled away for the sole reason that they feel the loss of them. When it is a question of the pure and clearly differentiated types of feelings, then emotions are capable of being registered and measured physiologically as brain activity. But to my understanding, it is not possible to localize the different emotions we experience in distinct, separate parts of the brain. It is not possible to determine from an EEG or brain scans what type of feeling the person is experiencing. Later in this book we will encounter Mitya Karamazov who commits the most contemptible betrayal of a woman for whom he, at the same time, has high respect. Even in Dostoevsky, where especially strong feelings occur, the feelings can be quite intricate.

A stimulating theoretician who has attached special importance to compound feelings is Sianne Ngai, who wrote Ugly Feelings (2005). She refers to the feelings she writes about as “negative feelings,” but there is no doubt that what makes several of these negative feelings burdensome is precisely that they are compound or ambivalent. She creates new designations for new feelings that she considers compound and characteristic for our period of late modernity, for example, stuplimity, which describes an intertwined emotion composed of “shock and bore-
dom.” She also asserts that it is characteristic for people of our time to be in a “...state of feeling vaguely ‘unsettled’ or ‘confused,’ or, more precisely, a meta- feeling in which one feels confused about what one is feeling.” She also writes about “this very specific state of affective indeterminacy as the negative feeling of ‘disconcertedness’ – the feeling of not being ‘focused’ or ‘gathered’” (Ngai 2005, 14). For Ngai there is no doubt that these feelings are culturally and historically determined. They characterize people of our time, in our part of the world. In this sense Ngai has the same fundamental perspective as Nussbaum and Ahmed. Perhaps one could say that they are within the theoretical tradition from Freud’s famous *Civilization and its Discontents* with respect to the intermediate position between the individual and the cultural.

**XI**

Increased interest in emotion and affect is in evidence in many fields and disciplines. Not all of the contributors who are mentioned in this introduction can be said to have had a direct influence on the study of literature. However, Sianne Ngai is a professor of American Literature. Martha Nussbaum is a philosopher, but has been interested in the relationship between philosophy and literature for a large portion of her career, and both Sara Ahmed and Brian Massumi are often referred to in literary studies. However the *litterateur* who has been the most direct inspiration for the following studies is Patrick Colm Hogan and his book *Affective Narratology. The Emotional Structure of Stories* (2011). Hogan has attempted to make affective based concepts usable in concrete narrative analysis, and he has done this in ways that inspire further attempts along the same lines. Hogan will be mentioned and credited subsequently in the analyses. It must be mentioned here that it is Hogan’s expansion of the vocabulary of narratological concepts that interests me, not his theoretical point of view. Hogan moves close to universalization of a very limited number of basic literary narratives. He asserts clearly that it is the human “mind” that causes people everywhere on the globe to tell the “same” stories. Hogan is not at all blind to the cultural aspects of stories, but he moves continually towards generalizations and universalizations that allow him to see “the same” in “the dissimilar.” I have difficulty in following Hogan particularly far along in these universalizations. In spite of this skepticism, he has nevertheless inspired my efforts at an “affective narratology.”
The following studies share an affinity relationship to “the affective turn” and to newer narratology. With respect to the relationship with narratology, it should be emphasized that it is hardly a matter of a close connection to classical structuralist narratology, à la Greimas, Todorov or Genette. However, there are already today several generations of researchers who are working on the continuation of classical narratology. The publication of David Herman’s *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis* (1999) and Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik’s *Postclassical Narratology: Approaches and Analyses* (2010) have been depicted as representative for two such postclassical narratology generations (Alber and Fludernik 2010, 1). A number of post-classicists seem to be most engaged in discussing and adapting the classicists’ core concepts, “focusing on theoretical blind spots, gaps, or indeterminacies within the standard paradigm” (ibid., 3). In my opinion, this pursuit is not the most interesting. Another general tendency is that the analysis of narrative elements is spreading beyond the field of the novel, much further beyond the literary field, to other media and other professional areas, for example medicine, law and so forth. This is a development that I think is productive and inspiring. In such a context, it should not surprise anyone that the narrative elements in the following analyses are traced in dramatic, lyric and philosophical genres. In the postclassical context, these are very circumspect extensions of the narratological field. Another general tendency within postclassical narratology is the extension of the field of validity to multi-aesthetical areas. I also think this development is productive and interesting. In this book, the aesthetic interdisciplinary connections between literature and music play a central role in the chapter about *Gurrelieder.*

In spite of the postclassical development of narratology in several different directions, I have not seen that the perspectives that are concerned with affect and narration have received any central place in narratologists’ self-representation in publications like the ones mentioned above. With his *Affective Narratology*, Patrick Colm Hogan is relatively solitary in a comprehensive examination of affect and narration, even if he names a few other researchers within the cognitive tradition. To my understanding there is therefore ample opportunity for a study of this current type.

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6. There are many who have accomplished this earlier, among others Brian Richardson, Monika Fludernik and Ansgar Nünning. See Alber and Fludernik, 9.
7. Good examples are Werner Wolf, Marie-Laure Ryan and Jörg Helbig. See Alber and Fludernik, 9.
8. See Hogan, 15ff.
The book consists of five close readings of texts in the literary canon, one of which has an inter-artistic focus, plus an article with a more conceptual or culturally-historical focus. The objective is to contribute to the research tradition about the discussed works, but at the same time I wish to test different perspectives and concepts that will be able to contribute to the development of an affective narratology. This implies that the different analyses have the extra goal of aiming to gather insights and methodical elements that hopefully can have transfer value for other analyses with a corresponding focus. In the concluding chapter I will undertake a short summary where I call attention to such elements.
Story and Emotion in Dostoevsky’s
*The Brothers Karamazov*

Research and dissemination of Dostoevsky’s work has been dominated by interest in the ideological aspects of his authorship. This is especially the case for his masterpiece *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880). In his monumental *Dostoevsky. The Mantle of the Prophet 1871–1881* (2002), Joseph Frank, for example, writes that “Indeed this work towers even over his earlier masterpieces, and succeeds in achieving a classical expression of the great theme that had preoccupied him since *Notes from the Underground*: the conflict between reason and Christian faith” (Frank 2002, 567). This is evident too from Dostoevsky’s own self-understanding of and participation in his era, as it is expressed, for example, in his magazine *Vremja* and in *Diary of a Writer*. The conflict between ideas, ideologies and philosophies of life is central to all of Dostoevsky’s great novels. One has only to think of the contrast between Raskolnikov and Sonya in *Crime and Punishment*, the contrast between Myshkin and Rogozhin in *The Idiot*, or between Alyosha, Mitya and Ivan in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Still, it is surprising that the affective aspect has not played a larger role in the reception of Dostoevsky’s work. Deborah A. Martinsen’s book *Surprised by Shame. Dostoevsky’s Liars and Narrative Exposure* (2003), in which the study of shame plays a decisive roll, is an interesting exception. To my understanding, Dostoevsky is an author who in long passages in the course of the plot writes from one affect to the next, to the same extent that he writes from event to event. The affects are often the very incentives for the epic events, they are almost always unusually powerful, and the shift between different affects are possibly just as important happenings in the story as the outer events are. The affects often have as much of a meaning for the incidents as the incidents have on the affects. An indication of this focus on affects in *The Brothers Karamazov* comes as early as the opening discussion of the central father figure Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov’s first wife. The narrator wants to explain why a rich, beautiful and intelligent girl could decide to marry such an insignificant fellow and “ill-natured buffoon” as Fyodor Pavlovich (Dostoevsky 1976, 3). The explanation is “romantic” inclinations, and in this connection the narrator refers to another

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young girl he himself knew, who committed suicide by throwing herself into a river “entirely to satisfy her own caprice, and to be like Shakespeare’s Ophelia” (3). The narrator comments, “Indeed, if this precipice, a chosen and favourite spot of hers, had been less picturesque, if there had been a prosaic flat bank in its place, most likely the suicide would never have occurred.” This fatal occurrence is connected to the “romantic generation” and is represented in a light, critically ironic tone (3). However it becomes apparent that the acts of the novel’s main characters are just as affect-driven as the romantic woman’s, and the depictions are then usually without irony. Fyodor Pavlovich’s second wife, who is only described briefly in the introduction, is also depicted as a woman totally engulfed by the power of her emotions. Not only is she characterized by “phenomenal meekness and submissiveness,” her sensitivity developed into a nerve disease that presented itself in fits of hysterics; she was said to be “possessed by devils,” and the narrator informs us that this nerve disease is an illness that is “frequently found in peasant women” (8). But it is not only hysterical women who, from the beginning, focus clear attention on the emotional drama in *The Brothers Karamazov*; “the buffoon,” Fyodor Pavlovich himself, is characterized already in the opening paragraphs as “a trashy and depraved type” (2), and “of a voluptuous temper” (3). There can be no doubt that we shall encounter emotionally driven characters in Dostoevsky’s masterpiece. These are the aspects I will pursue in this reading. I wish to illuminate the affective patterns of the main characters’ personalities. Moreover, I will investigate how Dostoevsky to some extent uses affective elements as primary motives in the novel’s plot. And additionally, I will attempt to contribute to a reevaluation of the established image of Ivan Fyodorovich and his supposedly rationalistic, logical and coolly intellectual attitude towards life. An analysis with an emphasis on affective systems will likely show that Ivan is just as emotionally or affectively driven as his half-brother Dmitri, even if his temperament is different. To underrate Ivan’s affective pattern of reactions is a widespread misinterpretation. In addition, with a background in text analysis, it should likely be possible to establish incrementally a few concepts for phenomena that can perhaps have relevance beyond the concrete text interpretation. In my opinion, classical narratology requires supplementation by means of a “postclassical” expansion of the analytical system of concepts so that there is a place for affective and emotional aspects of the complex art of narrative. The following is therefore partially intended as an interpretation of Dostoevsky’s masterpiece, *The Brothers Karamazov*, and partly towards supplementation of narratological concepts.

But first we must cast a glance at the actual plot structure of the novel.
PLOT STRUCTURE

*The Brothers Karamazov* has a relatively complicated plot structure in which unequal configurations intersect with each other and shape connections between different layers in the plot. It is natural at the outset to allow for at least five intersecting plot constellations: the family plot, the crime plot, the erotic plot, the social plot and the ideological plot.10

The novel’s title forewarns one of the plot structures, the family plot. Fully central to the work is the relationship between fathers and sons.11 At the center stands Fyodor Pavlovich, the father figure. He is encircled by four sons in a complicated family structure. With his first wife, Adelaïda Ivanovna, he has a son Dmitri Fyodorovich who is twenty-eight years old when the main action begins. But Fyodor Pavlovich was “one of the most senseless madcaps in the whole district” (2) and Adelaïda Ivanovna ran away from him when Dmitri was three years old, only to die a short time later in exceedingly down-and-out circumstances. With his second wife, Sofya Ivanovna, Fyodor Pavlovich had two sons, Ivan and Alexey, of about twenty four and twenty years of age respectively when the story starts. Sofya Ivanovna died when Alexey was four years old. In addition to the three legitimate sons, Fyodor Pavlovich had an illegitimate son, Smerdyakov, who was born in dramatic circumstances to a homeless woman, Stinking Lizaveta. It was highly probable that it was Fyodor Pavlovich who impregnated her, something that actually happened as a consequence of a wager with drinking companions. Lizaveta died during the birth, which took place in Fyodor Pavlovich’s garden. The servant Grigory found Lizaveta while she was giving birth, and took care of Smerdyakov. He grew up under Grigori’s protection, and later became Fyodor Pavlovich’s servant.

10. Victor Terras writes the following about different points of view of the polyphonic composition in *The Brothers Karamazov*: “The Brothers Karamazov shows the world on several levels, or from several viewpoints, in a style we might call ‘polyphonic’ (with reference to Bakhtin). Viacheslav Ivanov distinguishes the level of plot, the psychological, and the metaphysical; Gessen splits the last of these into the ‘metaphysical’ and the ‘mystical.’ Belknap very aptly says that ‘it is as if God and Christ and the Devil could only be approached through a hierarchy of narrators,’” (see Terras, Victor. [1981]. *A Karamazov Companion. Commentary on the Genesis, Language, and Style of Dostoevsky’s Novel*. University of Wisconsin Press, 85).

Fyodor Pavlovich had no sense of responsibility and no capacity for consideration of others. None of his sons grew up in his house. Grigory cared for them in their early years, and then Dmitry was fetched by his mother’s cousin, Pyotr Alexandrovich Miusov, who saw to his upbringing and education. Ivan and Alexey were taken in by Sofya Ivanovna’s foster mother, the widow of a general, and were later placed with Yefim Petrovich Polyonov, who became their guardian and foster father. It is the tension and conflicts between Fyodor Pavlovich and his sons that initiate the action and contribute to the novel’s rise of tension, disgrace and catastrophe.

This father-son configuration is contrasted to another type of father-son relationship in the novel. Alexey, most often referred to as Alyosha, is a novice in a monastery, and has a strong relationship with the elder monk, Zosima. This relationship is built on affiliation, and can be regarded as a positive counter example of a father-son relationship. When Zosima dies, Alyosha is sent “out in the world,” and the novel’s childhood motif, which is developed in Book X, is continued towards the end of the work along the lines of a new father-son relationship, where Alyosha appears as the guide to the young boys and as a partner in a possible future fraternity constructed upon affiliation. The biological family plot is depicted as destructive and quite free of any form of behaviors of attachment. Opposed to this are two environments tied to the figure of Alyosha, one clerical and one profane, where different forms of brother-ship are practiced under the leadership of non-biological father figures.

Just as central as the family plot is the crime plot. These two plot structures are tied closely together because the pivotal criminal act in the novel is the fratricide of Fyodor Pavlovich. The complexity consists in the fact that there is also a miscarriage (a murder) of justice. Dmitri is convicted of the murder, but the culprit is Smerdyakov. The crime plot is complicated still further by being linked to an ethical dilemma. As mentioned, Fyodor Pavlovich was regarded as one of the most mad and depraved subjects in his district. Many had wanted him dead, including Ivan, who feels guilty in complicity since he contributed in influencing Smerdyakov with his ideological point of view that “everything is allowed” when God is dead. Towards the end of the novel Ivan becomes seriously ill because of guilt.

One of the reasons that the miscarriage of justice occurs is that the court makes a natural, but erroneous connection between the criminal case and a third central plot configuration, the erotic plot structure. The erotic plot is also complex. It consists of three intense triangular relationships. The most important is the triangle that involves both the father Fyodor Pavlovich and his son Dmitri. They are both
obsessed by desire for the same woman, the erotically inciting *femme fatale* Grushenka. This erotic configuration is depicted with an intensity that makes the two libertines’ desires appear pathological, includes violence and threats of violence, and is intensified by being tied to an economical struggle between the same rivals. Dmitri believes he has been cheated out of his 3000 ruble inheritance, and Fyodor Pavlovich wants to pay Grushenka the same sum for just one visit. This rivalry is transferred to the criminal case, and nullifies any chance for Dmitri to be acquitted in court after Fyodor Pavlovich is killed.

Another erotic triangle which is depicted with great intensity is the relationship between Grushenka, Dmitri and Dmitri’s fiancée, the haughty Katerina Ivanovna. While Dmitri is chasing after Grushenka, his fiancée is namely trying to determine what will become of their relationship. The two women are implacable rivals throughout the entire novel. The engaged couple have an exceedingly strong, but ambivalent, relationship to each other, and this also persists to the novel’s last pages. During the court case, Katerina Ivanovna gives two different depositions, one in strong support of Dmitri, and one that is crushing, perhaps even decisive, to the guilty verdict. Nevertheless they throw themselves into each others’ arms in their last meeting at the prison hospital after Dmitri is sentenced. By then they have both begun new relationships, but confess an everlasting and impossible love for each other.

The new relationship into which Katerina is entering is a love affair with Dmitri’s half brother Ivan, who is seriously ill at her home. The third erotic triangle then is that of Dmitri – Katerina Ivanovna – Ivan. It is depicted with much less intensity than the other two, but while there is no doubt that Ivan harbors deep contempt for Dmitri, the rivalry between the two brothers is not violent or destructive. In fact, Ivan devises detailed plans and pays expenses so that Dmitri can escape under transport to the labor camp in Siberia.

As in most of Dostoevsky’s novels, there is a *social plot* structure in *The Brothers Karamazov* too, but perhaps it is an exaggeration to talk about plot in this context. It may be just as correct to employ the term: a societal theme. But social constellations tied to central characters in the novel take part in shaping a dynamic and complicated plot development in the work. It concerns, for example, the social tension between the three “legitimate” brothers on the one hand and Smerdyakov, with his homeless and socially outcast mother, on the other. It also concerns the tension between Dmitri on the one hand and Captain Snegiryov on the other hand. Dmitri’s degrading and violent treatment of the unfortunate staff captain foreshadows the story of Ilyusha and the school boys whom Alyosha enters into fraternity with towards the end of the novel. This development creates the final climax in the
text along with Alyosha’s speech to the boys when Ilyusha dies. It would not be unreasonable to regard the social configuration as a subplot in the novel. Even if it has a subordinate position as regards the plot, it is nonetheless thematically important, underscored since it has the last word in the novel. It represents possible joint efforts that point ahead towards the future and a new generation. All of the other constellations in the novel reflect a conspicuous lack of solidarity where one would otherwise expect to find it, in family relations and romantic relationships. In addition, the social layer in the novel reveals Dostoevsky’s legacy from realism. As in most of Dostoevsky’s novels, virtually all social strata are represented, and many different environments are described.

From a contemporary perspective it is striking that the portrayal of social life is almost without focus on any type of economic life. Almost none of the characters we encounter work. There are farmers on the periphery of the novel’s center, and one assumes that they work on the estates that are mentioned. But for that matter we hear little about people participating in any kind of working life. Economics plays an important role in the novel, but only in the form of inheritance and loans. Fyodor Pavlovich, who works his way up economically in society, evidently does so primarily by means of “vile tricks” and by arrogating the dowry of his first wife. People seem chiefly to live on inherited fortunes or financial subsidy. We first encounter Alyosha as a novice in the monastery, but after he leaves there, we hear nothing of how he finds a means of support. He is continually present wherever people congregate, runs from errand to errand, and fills his days with conversations. Dmitri is desperately in search of money, but in connection with this he thinks only of inheritance. When Madame Khokhlakov makes the suggestion that he go away to work in the mines, he regards that as something unthinkable, pure punishment. It is not just work for wages that is alien to the universe of Dostoevsky’s novel – that could have an historical explanation – but it seems almost as if the life of work on the whole is foreign to him.

If the social configurations shape a subplot, one can perhaps say the opposite about the ideological plot. The configurations are complex on this level also. The dynamic development of the ideological tensions in the text take place in a nationalistic sphere, a sphere critical of modernity, and a religious sphere. There are elements of the Pan-Slavism that one is familiar with from the rest of Dostoevsky’s authorship. Traditional Russia, the Russian folk spirit, is assumed to have a historically significant responsibility with the purpose of nurturing and maintaining essential values which modern Europe seems to have renounced with its socialistic and nihilistic developments. European influence is essentially detrimental, as is already evident in the beginning of the novel when Adelaida Ivanovna’s strange
“lack of mental freedom” and romantic unsuitability for life are claimed to be due to “an echo of foreign ideas” (3). Dmitri’s foster father, Pyotr Alexandrovich Miüsov, is “a man of enlightened ideas and of European culture” and has been heavily influenced by his life in France, it is said that he “had known Proudhon and Bakunin personally” (5). All the same he is mainly positively portrayed. And yet, the ideological contrasts are clear: He “began an endless lawsuit ... He regarded it as his duty as a citizen and a man of culture to open an attack against the ‘clericals’.” (5–6). Towards the end of the novel, the contrast between the Russian and the foreign becomes clearly apparent in Dmitri’s contempt for America. He considers having to flee to America as a punishment in itself, and is already planning his return to Russia incognito. The layers of nationalism and critique of modernity in the text contribute to make the ideological tensions epoch-dependent and displays the author’s reactionary attitudes. However, they are not predominant in the representation. A much greater emphasis is placed on the religious aspects through the tension between European modernity and Russian tradition. These aspects too would probably have been engulfed by the course of time had it not been for the fact that the author through Ivan had bestowed on world literature some of the most famous textual passages we know on the subject, the legend about the “Grand Inquisitor” and Ivan’s rebellion against God. The struggle between the Russian belief in God and radical atheism can be said to form a certain plot structure in the novel since it develops dynamically through the course of the story and is tightly tied to the tension between the two brothers, Ivan, the rebel against God, and Alyosha “the monk.” The tension passes through several stages. However, it is indicative for the novel’s development that the greatest climax comes relatively early in the course of the text, that is, before the middle, in Book V. This is where Ivan advances his atheism, and the rest of the novel can be regarded as an attempt to reply to Ivan’s initiative. To the degree that the novel succeeds in this, it is a narrative answer that is given, not an argumentative one. So therefore it is reasonable to work with the ideological contrasts as a plot.

The religious layer in the text is already introduced in the introduction, in Book I, Chapter V, “Elders.” It is continued in Book II. Ivan’s legend and renunciation appears in Book V. It is proposed in a conversation with Alyosha, and is so incontestable that even Alyosha, the monk, is compelled to agree with his repudiating brother. The following Book VI, “The Russian Monk” cannot manage to bring a balance to the ideological struggle. It presents no answer to Ivan’s fundamental question, and does not counter his criticism. One can scarcely see it in any other light than that the plot development and the fate of the persons bearing the ideologies give a narrative victory in the battle to the believer Alyosha. In the course
of the novel, Ivan falls to pieces from within, his personality disintegrates, and he is overtaken by madness. He cannot tolerate the burden from his feeling of guilt and his isolated existence. At the conclusion of the novel, Ivan is lying ill and unconscious in the home of Katerina Ivanovna, and it appears uncertain if he will survive – while Alyosha gives his ecstatic speech for the “gang of boys” about a fellowship for the future, where a new future for a new generation is indicated. Yet no one has been capable of refuting Ivan’s revolt against God.

AFFECTIVE NARRATOLOGY

As we have seen, ever since the early days of literary theory there has been attention to the importance of emotions for aesthetic experience. Plato’s restrictive stand in *The Republic* was due to fear of what aesthetically evoked feelings could lead to in community life. In Aristotle’s *Poetics*, we find an entirely different attitude: “Through fear and pity” the artistic imitation of human actions can lead to “the catharsis of the emotions involved.” In spite of different attitudes in principle to the emotional aspects of art, both are still primarily engaged with art’s effects on listeners or the public. This tendency has been continued in contributions to modern theory. Two examples are Alan Palmer’s *Fictional Minds* (2004) and Suzanne Keen’s *Empathy and the Novel* (2007). Palmer is especially occupied with the meaning of emotions as readers work on understanding “fictional minds.” Keen discusses the empathic appeal that emanates from novel to reader. In *Affective Narratology. The Emotional Structure of Stories*, Patrick Colm Hogan asserts that “Other recent work on emotion and narrative has tended to focus on reader response in a more strictly empirical or experimental way” (Hogan 2011, 14) and refers to Keith Oatley’s contributions, among others.

These are extremely pivotal questions which concern the functions of art and literature, and I shall return to such questions later. However, in my reading of *The Brothers Karamazov* I want, following Patrick Colm Hogan, to direct attention to a greater degree towards a possible affective narratology; first and foremost my reading will deal with the function of emotions in the plot and their importance for the characters in the story. On several points in the following, I will take advantage of viewpoints from Hogan’s book. But Hogan moves gradually in a direction of greater generalization, and directs focus towards “the broad structure of stories” and towards “main cross-cultural types of stories,” of which he believes there are three prototypes: “heroic, romantic and sacrificial” (19). Everything considered, Hogan is more engaged with “The Mind” than with either stories or emotions in his research, as comes to light in his book *The Mind and Its Stories. Narrative Uni-
versals and Human Emotion (2003). (He would like literature to have a larger role in cognitive study in order to find commonalities.) He seeks answers to the type of question posed by, for example, Mark Turner, who states, “We do not ask, what is the human mind that it can create and understand a text? What is a text that it can be created and understood by the human mind?” With this background Hogan is looking for “literary universals” (Hogan 2003, 4). I have another intention, which is to undertake a more specific analysis of circumstances in the selected text, The Brothers Karamazov. So I will only be able to take advantage of Hogan’s conclusions to a certain extent.

Having outlined the novels’ plot configurations, the intention now is to trace an “affective narratology” in Dostoevsky’s art of the novel. The narrative proceedings in the novel begin in Book II in a quite definite way, not by the occurrence of a sudden and unexpected event that starts a dramatic chain of actions, but by those involved in the complex family structure themselves arranging a meeting or a family council. However even the title of Book II warns that the family council will not proceed as planned: “An Unfortunate Gathering.”

Book II is basically comprised by two emotionally harrowing visits, one in the monastery cell of the Elder Zosima (Chapters I–VI) and one with the Father Superior, where the visitors are invited to dinner (Chapter VIII). Both visits end in scandalous scenes. Between these visits the author has inserted a calmer interlude in which Alyosha and the divinity student Rakitin discuss the rivalry between Fyodor Pavlovich and Dmitri (Chapter VII). The first visit, which is most thoroughly described, has a comparable three part composition. It consists of two conversational sequences in Zosima’s cell, interrupted by an interlude in which Zosima leaves the cell to meet with some visiting women who are waiting for his blessing. With respect to composition, Dostoevsky works with a fractal structure wherein not only the pattern, but also the spiral of suspense, are reflected. Both structures create an ascent of motion from tension to scandal with a calmer section inserted as a rhythmic resting pulse in the dramatic proceedings. The parts of the composition are marked by arrivals, entrances and exits from the story’s different spaces. What is striking in the narrative is that Dostoevsky creates a highly dramatic development totally without the use of events or incidents. He does so entirely through the means of conversation between people. Within the basic structure of composition he has placed six different sequences of conversation, and it is solely clashes between persons and temperaments that shape the dramatic development; in other words, the unveiling and collision of aggressive and destructive emotions in a narratively limited space. The first conversation takes place mainly between Fyodor Pavlovich, Pyotr Alexandrovich Mülsov and the
Elder Zosima; the second between Zosima and the women; the third between Ivan and the clerics; the fourth between Fyodor Pavlovich and Dmitri; the fifth between Alyosha and Rakitin; and the sixth between Fyodor Pavlovich and all the others present with the Father Superior.

The prerequisites for destructive emotions being able to exist and develop so catastrophically during the conference lie in the complex structure of the family. The biological family relations are first and foremost characterized by a lack of affects and emotions that usually hold families together. The father Fyodor Pavlovich has no abilities at all as a figure of attachment. If we use Keith Oatley and Jennifer Jenkins’ three central concepts of social motivation, assertion, attachment and affiliation, one can conclude that the Karamazov family emerges as totally without attachment.¹² Fyodor Pavlovich is completely governed by assertion. The three brothers did not grow up together, and the action begins when they all three suddenly find themselves in their hometown at the same time. To a certain extent, and to differing degrees, they develop a certain affiliation for each other as the story advances. But to a much greater extent, it is the destructive feelings among the members of the family that determine the course of the action.

Viewed through the progress of emotions, Book II starts with the arrival at the monastery where we are advised that Miüsov is uncomfortable with the situation and is anxious about what might occur. As an atheist, he opposes the entire institution of the monastery, which, moreover, he is engaged in a lawsuit against. In addition, as Dmitri’s foster father, he reacts with loathing for Fyodor Pavlovich. He shows great irritation when no one greets them at their arrival at the monastery, and the narrator clearly describes his feelings: “His liberal irony was rapidly changing almost into anger” (28). Of course Fyodor Pavlovich notices Miüsov’s irritability and teases him with provocative sarcasm and contemptuous sneers. Shortly thereafter, he mocks Miüsov for being brought to an uproar: “I can’t think why you are so agitated” (31).

In many ways this opening is prototypical for the entire following proceedings. The meeting is characterized by a latent tension which causes everyone to be in a state of emotional preparedness in one form or another. For example, it is said of Alyosha that “The blood rushed to Alyosha’s cheeks. He was ashamed” almost as soon as the visitors enter Zosima’s cell, simply in fear of what would happen next (32). In this situation Fyodor Pavlovich behaves as a provocateur and buffoon and

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¹² Oatley defines these three concepts of social motivations: “assertion of ourselves against others in conflicts over status and power; attachment, in which we depend on others whom we trust for protection against danger; and affiliation, in which we commit ourselves to each other in friendly cooperation.” (Oatley 2004, 81)
provokes strong counteractive emotions in the other visitors. Time and again Miúsov becomes indignant over the initiatives of Fyodor Pavlovich. The two are constantly flinging provocative remarks at each other, which leads to the steady increase of an emotionally charged atmosphere in the text. In addition, Miúsov reacts with aversion to the Elder. “To all appearances a malicious soul, full of petty pride” he thought (32). When Fyodor Pavlovich begins to speak directly to the Elder, Miúsov loses his self-control, something which happens several times. But Fyodor Pavlovich cannot stop. He throws himself into a performative monologue, an irascible and pathetic performance in which he characterizes himself as “a real buffoon!” (33) He behaves foolishly and with a lack of respect and awakens anger and embarrassment in the others present. “Alyosha stood, with hanging head, on the verge of tears” (35). All the same, everyone seems to be clearly aware that Fyodor Pavlovich is acting and just playing a part (37). Even the Elder remarks that “all this, too, is deceitful posturing” (36). Fyodor Pavlovich is quite simply pulling the old monk’s leg.

Those who are most capable of keeping control of their reactions are nevertheless precisely the monks. Especially Zosima himself reacts in a surprising way. In the middle of Fyodor Pavlovich’s display, he says, “Do not trouble. Make yourself quite at home. And, above all, do not be so ashamed of yourself, for that is at the root of it all” (35). Fyodor Pavlovich’s conduct appears more than anything else precisely shameless – as he appears for that matter in almost everything he does. The Elder, however, gives a psychological analysis of Fyodor Pavlovich’s behavior, and claims that the emotional incentive for his tomfoolery is shame. To this analysis, Fyodor Pavlovich responds with the following admission: “you pierced right through me with that remark, and read me to the core” (36). The two then proceed to a discussion about the pleasure in feeling oneself mistreated and offended. In this way the psychological analysis of compound and paradoxical emotions play an important role in the first conversational sequence. There is an unexpected conclusion to the conversation. After Fyodor Pavlovich obliges with a story he attributes to Miúsov, which by his own account shook his faith, the Elder rises suddenly and leaves the room. He is going to meet with women who are waiting for his blessing.

Emotional Spaces

As a prototype this conversation is interesting with respect to several specific narrative features. In the first place, locality seems to play a significant role in affective narratology. Initially, it appears strange to seek to resolve an economic family
conflict in a monastery cell by means of a family council with a monk, who would be assumed to know more about spiritual questions than inheritance rights. Of course, one could say that this localizing contributes in linking the connection between the novel’s family plot and the ideological plot. However, I think that one can also establish a hypothesis concerning affective narratology from the localization of these conversations. In affective narratology, spatiality aspects play a special role. By means of narrative devices the author creates specific affective or emotional spaces, and allows the affects of the characters to take place within these spaces to attain definite effects. Consequently the localization of emotional incidents do not emerge as neutral surroundings for individual outbursts of feeling. There are both macro- and micro-emotional geographies. For that matter, in Dostoevsky’s view there is little doubt that the very attitude towards life is different in Russia than in Europe. I will return to such emotional macro-geographies in another chapter in this book. Of more current interest for the specific scene we are discussing here is that when the visitors step inside the walls of the monastery, and subsequently into Zosima’s cell, they are arriving in an already emotionally encoded space. Miúsov perceives it immediately, and reacts with antipathy, and, as we have already heard, almost with anger. This is not his place. He is very aware that there are powerful expectations for behavior in this space, and he fears with good reason that Fyodor Pavlovich will not respect these expectations. The room is not just a container for the individual emotional display of the people who are present. The room is emotionally encoded.

At this point, it is relevant to bring in some viewpoints from Patrick Colm Hogan’s book *Affective Narratology*. He too is occupied with “Emotional Geography” and that “spatiality, the ‘existential’ experience of location, is fundamentally an emotional experience” (Hogan 2011, 29). Hogan stresses, among other things, what he calls “…the baseline from which emotions arise. This is normalcy. More often than not, emotions are a response to changes in what is routine, habitual, expected. We anticipate normalcy unreflectively” (30). Even if Miúsov and Fyodor Pavlovich are not familiar with what is “habitual” in the monastery, it is obvious that Miúsov to a large extent anticipates the monastery’s normalcy, and is troubled because Fyodor Pavlovich does not. The narrator is also concerned with this relationship between Fyodor Pavlovich’s behavior and the “normalcy” of the place. It is clearly important that the reader is made aware of the “normalcy” of the space so that the effect of “changes in what is routine” is assured:

What was taking place in the cell was really incredible. For forty or fifty years past, from the times of former elders, no visitors had entered that cell without
feelings of the profoundest veneration. Almost everyone admitted to the cell felt that a great favour was being shown him. Many remained kneeling during the whole visit (Dostoevsky, 34).

The rupture with the expected is explicitly emphasized by the narrator: “So that the buffoonery shown by Fyodor Pavlovich, the lack of reverence for the place he was in, amazed and bewildered the spectators…” (35). The emotional drama in the current scene is not due just to the fool’s buffoonery alone, nor just to the clash between the different emotional natures of those present, but to a high degree also to the rupture with the “normalcy” of the emotionally encoded room. There is good reason to assume that this is a generally valid characteristic of affective narratology.

Performative and Analytical Emotionality

Another prototypical feature of the scene is the relationship between a performative emotional layer in the text and a parallel analytical emotional layer. As we have seen, Fyodor Pavlovich behaves completely disrespectfully and apparently shamelessly face to face with the gathered group of people and as a guest in Zosima’s cell. He takes over and conquers the room, filling it with his uninhibited personality, his tomfoolery and his emotionality. His torrent of speech is unstoppable; he barely lets anyone get a word in edgewise and, as the narrator expresses it, he “was playing a part again” (37). But as already mentioned his brazenness is analyzed and exposed by Zosima as driven by feelings of shame. In this way, a discrepancy arises – a direct contrast between the emotional play presented on the stage and the analysis of it. In and of itself, the observation of a clear emotional layer and a corresponding latent layer in a literary text is commonplace. This is a normal situation in texts of literary quality, and constitutes one of the reasons that there exists an analytical and interpretative literary field of study. In texts after Romanticism, it is customary for the analytical layer to be unrepresented in the text, but left to the reader or interpreter. It is precisely the discrepancy between a performative emotional layer in the text and a latent layer that has made possible the mobilization of a multitude of psychological theorists in interpretation of literary texts. Especially in Dostoevsky’s novels the occurrence of compound and apparently paradoxical emotions are a basic feature. In the first place, it is mentioned here so that the relationship can be included in what I call an affective narratology. I generally regard it to be an important aspect in that sense. Secondly, I think it can be part of explaining why the author in the current instance has
placed the Karamazov family’s council in the Elder’s cell. It has obviously been a point that the analytical emotional layer should be represented in the text. The Elder Zosima has, as the representative of judgement and wisdom, received the role of the analyst or the psychologist. He is clearly capable of “reading people’s insides.” It is conspicuous that during the entire visit to his cell, he behaves much more like a clever psychologist than as a Christian guide. When Fyodor Pavlovich suddenly asks, “what must I do to gain eternal life?” he receives the utmost conventional answer: “You have known for a long time what you must do. You have sense enough: don’t give way to drunkenness and incontinence of speech; don’t give way to sensual lust; and above all, to the love of money. And close your taverns” (36). Such advice really appears to be religious clichés, but the ability to read the inner man takes one by surprise, is unusual and gives new perspectives to the text. Zosima’s conduct as a psychological analyst recurs in the next conversation, in which the Elder pronounces a comparable penetrating analysis of Ivan’s emotional state. In that case the conversation deals with an article that Ivan has written pertaining to the relationship between the church and the state, as well as viewpoints he has advanced about the relationship between godlessness and the dissolution of ethical norms. Ivan, who both on this occasion and elsewhere in the novel, appears mostly as a philosophical atheist, is now suddenly made a subject of the Elder’s emotional analysis:

“The question [There is no virtue if there is no immortality] is still fretting your heart, and not answered. But the martyr likes sometimes to divert himself with his despair, as it were driven to it by despair itself. Meanwhile, in your despair, you, too, divert yourself with magazine articles, and discussions in society, though you don’t believe your own arguments, and with an aching heart mock at them inwardly . . . That question you have not answered, and it is your great grief, for it clamors for an answer” (61).

After this analysis Ivan rises and respectfully accepts the Elder’s blessing.

Emotional Trigger Figures

We should call attention to an additional prototype in the current scene, namely the use of emotional trigger figures. Miúsov’s function in the first conversational sequence serves as an example. He participates in the scene in a way, but he primarily occupies a position of observation. Later, especially in the conversation with Ivan, it is clear that he attempts to obtain a status as participant, but does not quite
succeed. He is obviously a supporting character in all the scenes where he appears, and he never manages to be seen with as much authority and consideration as he himself clearly wishes to be. All the same, it is striking how often he is mentioned in the text. This is because he takes care of a definite function in the affective narratology. He is a trigger figure who is influenced by place, people and events that happen. He is, so to speak, a thermometer for the emotional charges in the text; he gives responses to situations, and becomes a narrative marker for the text’s increasing emotional tension. We constantly hear how agitated he is, that he can no longer manage to control himself, that he will wash his hands of being lumped together with Fyodor Pavlovich, etc. etc. He rarely contributes input that changes the course of the text or reveals new information. He functions quite simply as an emotional dipstick. Alyosha also acts several times in the current scene as a similar emotional trigger figure. Narratively they function as sequentially placed elements in the text where explicit information about its emotional temperature is given. An important point is that the sequential series demonstrates a degree of escalation, and in this way contributes to increasing the level of tension in the text. It is obvious, in fact, that such trigger figures function as mirroring characters for the reader. Müsov’s reactions to Fyodor Pavlovich’s behavior represents a “normal” indisposition and indignation to the situation. The readers will easily identify with these reactions, and themselves “feel” the trigger figure’s indignant hostility. There is reason to assume that this technique is also a widespread method of shaping emotional tension in an affective narratology. At any rate, Dostoevsky utilizes it often. In some instances, the narrator himself can act as an emotional trigger figure. An emotional trigger figure will most often have feelings or reactions where there is little doubt about who the object of the feelings are – in contrast to other literary characters that can be complex, and who often have feelings that they themselves don’t know the cause of. In the current case, Müsov is partially triggered by monastery life, but of course primarily by Fyodor Pavlovich’s behavior. The object for Alyosha’s trigger feelings is only Fyodor Pavlovich.

“Low-road Reactions”
The fourth conversation in Book II, the argument between Fyodor Pavlovich and Dmitri in Chapter VI, is emotionally more intense than the preceding ones; here

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13. Emotional trigger figures are literary characters, most often minor characters, who give situational responses to actions and function as thermometers for the emotional charge of the text. Most often such trigger figures also function as mirror characters for an implied reader in the sense that they signal how the text expects the reader to react to the narrative.
the chief rivals oppose each other in a direct quarrel. Dmitri comes an hour late to “the unfortunate gathering,” but after he arrives in the Elder’s cell, it does not take long before the tension is released in a veritable verbal battle. The quarrel almost ends in a physical fight. “If you were not my son I would challenge you this instant to a duel . . . with pistols, at three paces! . . .” howls Fyodor Pavlovich (64). However, narratologically we observe several of the same functions as in the earlier conversations. Here too what is said is accompanied by reactions from emotional trigger figures among the minor characters. This time both Father Iosif, Kalganov and Miüsov function as trigger figures. At one time, “ ‘This is unendurable!’ was heard on all sides in the cell” (65). Yet in this chapter, there is less need for such trigger figures because the two troublemakers trigger each other to such a high degree that no one can be in doubt about the level of the emotional intensity.

In this connection we see that the author uses a new device in his affective narratology. It is not completely new, certainly; we have already seen it with Alyosha a few times earlier. I am thinking of purely physical reactions that are not controlled by consciousness or by intellectual deliberations. In the conversation discussed earlier, we heard that Alyosha became blood red in the face and that he was on the verge of tears. It has also been the case previously that the use of the voice has characterized emotional agitation. Fyodor Pavlovich does not “speak” or “say” things, he “yells” and “roars.” In the quarrel with Dmitri he “cried … hysterically, squeezing out a tear” (63). But we also hear about other physical reactions: Dmitri is “breathless” when Fyodor Pavlovich brings Katerina Ivanovna into the matter. Right afterwards, we learn that Dmitri was “trembling with rage.” He has to stop his own speech because his body reacts on its own: “He could not go on. His eyes were glittering and he breathed with difficulty” (63). At a time when he is “beside himself with rage” we hear that he “looked almost deformed” (65).

Here we are confronted with a type of emotional reaction which is discussed in this book’s introduction, and one with which most psychologists have been occupied. It is a question of Darwin’s “snake reaction,” the Stoics’ “first movement,” Joseph Ledoux’s low road of senses directly to the body, without going through the cortex. These are reactive emotions that occur when something happens that does not have a place in our “assumed world.” These are emotions that quite clearly “give life its urgency” (Oatley, 4). It is stressed in several places in Dostoevsky’s text that Dmitri had expected something entirely different in the meeting with the Elder Zosima. “I had come to forgive him if he held out his hand; to forgive him, and ask forgiveness!” (Dostoevsky, 63). But Fyodor Pavlovich’s behavior confronts him with something quite different than “the assumed world.” The reactions are not only strong and emotional; they are physical and beyond the control of the will. In
line with Joseph LeDoux’s concepts, I choose to call them low-road reactions. They are an important part of Dostoevsky’s affective narratology, and there is no doubt that such physical responses indicate an especially high emotional level of tension. In Dostoevsky’s authorship one can to some extent find a distribution of statements pertaining to emotional reactions and forms of reaction. If we make use of Keith Oatley’s concepts and differentiate between reactive emotion on the one hand and mood, sentiment and preference on the other, the latter (which can be understood as more permanent traits of personality or individual emotional tendencies) is often discussed by the narrator in connection with introducing personal characteristics (telling) while reactive emotions are depicted theatrically (showing).

An interesting question implicit in Dostoevsky’s narrative is to what extent physical emotional reactions must necessarily be regarded as authentic. If they pass directly from the senses to the rest of the brain and body, without cognitive input, one would suppose them to be authentic emotions, in other words, it should not be germane to imagine the possibility that someone could feign or fake reactions along the low road. Dostoevsky, or at least his narrator in The Brothers Karamazov, appears to have a different viewpoint. “‘A duel!’ yelled the old wretch again, breathless and spluttering at each syllable” (64). This is how one of Fyodor Pavlovich’s outbursts in the course of his quarrel with Dmitri is depicted. The narrator appears to mean that certain people by means of self entrancement can enter a state in which the body reacts as if to low road events:

With old liars who have been acting all their lives there are moments when they enter so completely into their part that they tremble or shed tears of emotion in earnest, although at that very moment, or a second later, they are able to whisper to themselves, “You know you are lying, you shameless old sinner! You’re acting now, in spite of your ‘holy’ wrath and your ‘holy’ moment of wrath.” (64)

To what extent this viewpoint is relative to modern psychology and the division between the physical low-road reactions and the cognitive high-road reactions is, as far as I can see, unsettled. Independent of what the answer may be to this question, I assume that the description of what I here have called “low-road” reactions be included as a standard element in a general affective narratology.

Scripts and Causal Attribution
The conclusion to the quarrel scene is enigmatic. Towards both Fyodor Pavlovich and Ivan, Zosima has behaved as an emotional analyst, really even as a psycho-
logical therapist. But towards Dmitri he retains his role as a religious figure. The entire séance ends when the Elder rises, goes over to Dmitri and falls on his knees in front of him. Dmitri stood “for a few moments in amazement” before he “hid his face in his hands, and rushed out of the room” (65).

Why Zosima performs this gesture is enigmatic, and Dmitri’s reaction is equally so. Fyodor Pavlovich’s defamatory attack on Dmitri has provoked a fight-reaction, a “stay and fight back” reaction: “But as he has just this minute insulted not only me, but an honorable young lady . . . I have made up my mind to show up his game, though he is my father!” (63). Nowhere in the novel does Dmitri evince timidity, quite the opposite. But to the Elder’s humble gesture he exhibits a reaction that resembles an instinctive response to danger. Both LeDoux and Oatley call attention to “freeze” or “escape” reactions as automated physical reactions to fear among all mammals. It’s a matter of “low-road” reactions in LeDoux’s conceptual vocabulary, or “first movement” reactions in Oatley’s. Such basic emotions arise in the limbic system, according to Oatley, preceding processing in the cortex. Why Zosima’s humble, non-threatening action provokes an instinctive danger reaction in Dmitri is and remains a mystery in the novel.

Such enigmas are important elements in Dostoevsky’s narrative art, and perhaps in most novels of superior quality. They reveal something about the complex and complicated emotionality of the literary characters. At the same time, riddles of this type always create a desire for interpretation in the reader. We wonder: What exactly is happening here? Even if one does not find an unambiguous answer, the question creates suspense, and in the act of reading it contributes to an accumulating uncertainty that seeks a solution in further reading. Connected to the discussion of an affective narratology, this type of riddle directs attention to at least two general questions: The first has to do with the sequence of emotions, or script-problematics, the other concerns what Hogan calls causal attribution.

The concept that emotions enlist entire sets of responses that, so to say, come in “packages,” in which emotions and reactions are tied together in scripts that form narrative sequences has occupied a number of psychologists. 14 There are typical forms of reaction in which emotions and responses appear in expected patterns. There also exist more individual life scripts with divergent patterns that can be due to particular personal experiences. Dmitri’s typical freeze and escape reaction is part of a very fundamental script which is common to most mammals; it is an instinctive response which follows immediately upon the perception of danger. When the reaction in Dmitri’s case apparently appears without an existing danger,

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it is natural that the question arises: What kind of individual experiences or deviating mind responds to peaceful gestures of humility with a reaction as if of danger? What kind of script can we imagine for Dmitri’s emotions? One can raise the same question in connection with Zosima’s action. What kind of script can one imagine for a holy monk who falls on his knees before an irascible trouble-maker after quite unseemly conduct?

Such questions are connected to what Patrick Colm Hogan calls causal attribution. He explains the phenomenon in this way:

When we experience an emotional spike, our cognitive response is partially automatic. Crucially, we shift our attentional focus. But just what do we shift our attentional focus to? It is relatively simple – causes, or possible causes. Almost immediately upon experiencing an emotion, we begin to attribute a cause. More precisely, we narrow our attentional focus to candidate causes, attributing a cause very quickly. This is crucial because causal attribution is a necessary prerequisite for any actional outcome. (Hogan 2011, 34).

So causal attribution is something we deal with all the time in daily life. For the most part, we have a good chance of discerning tolerably well. That is why social life functions as well as it does. But difficult situations exist where the chances of making a mistake are great. Creating hypotheses about the causes of other people’s feelings is, in any case, an activity that we are engaged in all the time. “We never directly know these causes. We must always infer them” Hogan writes. “Most often, however, we do not realize that we have to do this. We think that we know” (Hogan, 34–35). When it is a question of novels and narrative portrayals, as readers we most often find ourselves in the same situation as the fictional characters. The reader must, in common with the rest of the people who participate in the narrative universe, ask questions and form hypotheses about the causes of the feelings and behavior of the active characters. This is precisely what Fyodor Pavlovich does immediately after Zosima has kneeled in front of Dmitri: “‘What did it mean, falling at his feet like that? Was it symbolic or what?’ said Fyodor Pavlovich, suddenly quieted and trying to reopen conversation . . .” (Dostoevsky, 65) No one answers him, however. The same is probably the case with most readers at this point in the story. We ask the question about what the meaning could have been, probably without finding a clear answer. The reader’s causal attribution comes to a standstill, and the text remains enigmatic. From a general narratological perspective, there is good reason to believe that such places in the narrative where common causal attributions come to a standstill are important narratolog-
ical events. They build the indeterminacy of the text, and this vagueness becomes the reader’s challenge, especially indetermination tied to emotions and reactions. An affective narratological analysis should therefore be directed towards localizing places in the story where the automatic causal attribution does not work for the reader or for the participants in the story’s universe. The same holds true for feelings that break with common scripts or sequences where certain feelings usually form a part of a fixed pattern.

Among the most revealing of the other examples in *The Brothers Karamazov* are Katerina Ivanovna and Dmitri’s feelings and reactions in their relationship to each other. This finds expression especially towards the end of the novel. During the court case, Katerina Ivanovna initially gives a positive and humble deposition which is to Dmitri’s advantage. From the reader’s point of view, there is a quite spontaneous causal attribution that the reason for the testimony is Katerina’s deep love for Dmitri. She still loves him, despite the insults he has subjected her to. However, just after this she insists on giving another deposition. This time she produces a letter from Dmitri that puts the nail in his coffin, so to speak. In other words, Katerina Ivanovna’s second deposition is decisive to Dmitri’s guilty verdict, and his sentence of many years in a Siberian labor camp. The quite natural causal attribution on the reader’s side must be that she hates him intensely. The two depositions, and the reader’s natural causal attribution of emotions behind the different behaviors create a glaring contrast. The only possible interpretation from the reader’s side is that here we are confronted with an ambivalence of such a fundamental nature that the person involved has no control over it at all. The emotional division is so deep-seated in the personality that the executor lacks the reflexive insight and control of the actions. Katerina Ivanovna suffers from such a fundamental love/hate relationship that she must be regarded as a martyr to her own feelings; she does not have mastery over herself at all. It comes clearly to light during the second deposition, when she appears as a person entirely in the power of her feelings. She is described by the narrator as “the raving, hysterical woman” (656). She screams “shrieking loudly” at Mitya that he is a monster (653). The disintegration rips her to pieces to the extent that, after giving her two depositions, she collapses sobbing on the floor and has to be carried out of the courtroom.

Katerina Ivanovna’s ambivalent feelings parallel Dmitri’s. Throughout a large part of the novel, we have learned how he has betrayed, rejected and humiliated her. He used her money to seduce another woman, and he did so quite openly, so that Katerina Ivanovna was disgraced. He is erotically obsessed with Grushenka, and rejects his fiancée. Time and again he has uttered statements full of distain. So
when she takes revenge on him in her second disposition in court, sending him to Siberia, one would expect that her hate and fateful, hostile action would trigger reactions in Dmitri corresponding to an expected *script*: Hate and antagonism should presumably release anger, rage, despair, and reciprocal hate as well. Dmitri reacts completely differently. As pointed out before, it is absolutely urgent for him to meet her for a last time before he is transported to Siberia. She resists, but does come. When they meet under these very somber circumstances they display a mutual, deep and reciprocal, but hopeless, love. Not only that: Dmitri even says that he also loved her during the trial when she saw to it that he would be convicted:

“I shall love you, and . . . do you know, Katya,” Mitya began, drawing a deep breath at each word, “do you know, five days ago, that same evening, I loved you. . . . when you fell down and were carried out . . . All my life! So it will be, so it will always be . . .” (726)

**DMITRI FYODOROVICH**

It is hardly original to describe Dmitri as a man of emotions. In his massive Dostoevsky biography Leonid Grossman calls Dmitri, among other things “…a man of impulses and enthusiasms” (Grossman 1974, 580). Richard Peace writes about the three brothers: “in Alesha we have the soul; in Dmitrij the emotions; in Ivan the intellect” (229) Konstantin Mochulsky writes that “the principle of reason is embodied in Ivan: he is a logician and rationalist, an innate sceptic and negator; the principle of feeling is represented by Dmitry: in him is the ‘sensuality of insects’ and the inspiration of eros; the principle of will, realizing itself in active love as an ideal, is presented in Alyosha” (Mochulsky 1967, 597–98). Joseph Frank writes about Books VIII and IX: “The narrator takes great pains to explain all the twists and turns of Dmitry’s agitated emotions” (Frank 2002, 646).

In addition to the expected introduction in Book I, Dmitri is described particularly in the three “confessions” in Book III (Chapters III–V), in the attack on his father in Book III (IX) plus in Book VIII, which has the title “Mitya.” Of course, he also plays an important part in the investigation and the judicial process, and in the Epilogue. It is characteristic of descriptions of him that he almost always finds himself in an intense affective state of one kind or another. Neutral or harmonious calmness appears almost non-existent in his emotional repertoire, and the three “confessions” have been given the title “The Confession of an *Ardent* Heart” (Italics mine). Alyosha encounters him while he is guarding his father’s house, in
order to prevent Grushenka from seeking out Fyodor Pavlovich. The “confessions” take place in a dilapidated gazebo, and even in the beginning Alyosha is aware of his brother’s “exhilarated condition” (93).

In this episode we again notice what Hogan calls “the emotional geography.” The confessions take place in a ramshackle old gazebo in a back garden where Dmitri is concealing himself. Alyosha meets him by chance because he is taking a shortcut through town. This shortcut is described in detail, and it involves “skirting fences, climbing over wattle-fences, and crossing other people’s backyards” on the sly (91). Dmitri calls it “the back-way” (94). Along the way, Alyosha walks through a garden, and suddenly sees Dmitri beckoning violently to him. He does not dare shout, but is whispering because “I am guarding a secret.” No one must know that he is there. Alyosha needs assistance climbing over yet another fence before finding himself in the garden. Dmitri leads him to a secluded corner of the garden where “… in a thicket of lime trees and old bushes of black current, elder, snowball tree, and lilac, there stood a tumbledown green gazebo, blackened with age.” The gazebo is fifty years old, and “was all in decay … the woodwork smelled musty” (92). Dmitri, incognito, is in the fifth day of keeping a secret watch on his father’s house. And here he gives his confession, in a place halfway between delight and decay, halfway between civilization and nature, in a place one must go the “back-way” to find. It is not difficult to see that this place functions in several ways as an emblematic expression of Dimitri’s life and personality. The main heading of Book III is “The Sensualists” – but it is clearly a question of sensuality in decline. As we know, according to Hogan, “the baseline from which emotions arise” is normalcy (Hogan, 30). In the gathering in the monastery, the Karamazov clan found themselves in a place where a strictly established normalcy existed. The scandalous scenes arose because of the rupture of the normalcy of the location. In the decayed and deserted gazebo, we find ourselves in a place that no longer has an established normalcy. In many ways, it is a valid expression of Dimitri’s condition. He is living alongside the normalcy of social life. At one time the gazebo was likely a place for the romantic trysts of lovers. But it is an entirely different kind of love, and a totally different kind of meeting of lovers, that Dimitri is keeping watch for now. The rivalry is a decaying struggle of love, it smells of mold.

Dmitri’s confession comes in three phases, and in all three Alyosha works as a listening trigger figure. Initially it is the love of life that Dmitri wants to impart, but the joy in life is mingled with desperation over disgrace and humiliation. He finds expression for these feelings in world literature, which he apparently has been learning by heart. He quotes both from Schiller’s “Das Eleusische Fest” and “An die Freude.” It all begins euphorically:
I could take you in my arms, Alyosha, and press you to my bosom till I crush you, for in the whole world – in reality – (can you take it in?) I love no one but you!” He uttered the last words in a sort of exaltation. (Dostoevsky, 93)

But just afterwards, he is on the edge of despair: “Mitya broke into sobs and seized Alyosha’s hand. ‘My dear, my dear, in degradation, in degradation now, too’” (95). According to Dmitri, all the Karamazovs share a family characteristic; they are all insects and “that insect lives in you, too, and will stir up a tempest in your blood” (96). He says that the heart of man is a battlefield where “God and the devil are fighting” (97). But what torments him the most is finding himself in the crushing predicament between the two women. His guilty conscience over Katerina Ivanovna is weighing him down, but the desire for Grushenka is overpowering. He would marry her in a moment if she would have him, but, if not, he is prepared for the greatest humiliations only to be close to her. He says he will be her farm hand and will clean the dirt from her lovers’ galoshes if she is untrue to him. Dmitri Karamazov’s emotions have no “average” temperature.

It is important in this context to note that it is precisely Dmitri’s emotions that are the cause of his dilemma. On the one hand, he is deeply distressed about violating a woman’s honor; on the other, he is ravaged by a desire that has complete power over him. This very conflict is the motivation in Dmitri’s pattern of action. If he could have ratcheted down the fervor of his emotions, the entire situation of his life would have changed, and his tragedy would have been unthinkable. It is simply the intensity of Dmitri’s emotions that shape his world. Desire becomes greater than all the other elements of existence combined, and this ground-shattering desire is also the prime mover of the book. Uncontrollable emotion is at the center of the story.

A conspicuous feature of Dmitri’s emotionality is expressed in the meeting with Alyosha. The transition between ecstatic euphoria and sobbing despair transpires without outer impetus. Nothing happens in the environment where the two are sitting that would call for a drastic emotional turnabout. Dmitri’s emotionality is self-induced. The changes come by surprise, instantly, and they come from within. This contributes to making the causal attribution difficult for the rest of the characters in the novel, as well as for the reader. Dmitri is an unpredictable, capricious “drama king” with exaggerated intense emotions that continually cause him to act in a way that creates conformity between his emotions and surroundings. There is not necessarily a viable reason for Dimitri’s feelings, but with his emotionally based way of acting and reacting, he brings about situations where his feelings fit
in. In other words: Emotions create events; it is not events that create emotional responses. Emotions are the narrative incentive for the story.

An example of this is the attack on Fyodor Pavlovich in his home in Book III, Chapter IX. The main point here is that what could possibly have been the reason for Dmitri’s behavior, has not happened. He has guarded Fyodor Pavlovich’s house for a long time to make sure that Grushenka does not visit him. Now he suspects that she is in the house. He has not seen her, but jealousy and suspicion are more than good enough reasons for him to crash into his father’s house and wield brutish violence against both the servant Grigory, who had cared for him when he was a small child, and his father, whom he not only strikes down, but also kicks in the face. This results in total chaos in the house and everyone becomes involved in preventing an even greater calamity. Dmitri’s baseless suspicions and jealousy shape a situation to match his feelings. Grushenka is not there. But Dmitri’s emotions shape the world to fit his feelings. And by means of violent behavior this world also becomes a world in which all other persons must conduct themselves and act in accordance. The explicit invasion of Dmitri’s behavior in this scene shows how people with “free floating” emotions and lack of impulse control influence others. In the current situation Grigory, Smerdyakov, Alyosha and Ivan must all let themselves be guided by and act in accordance with Dimitri’s emotionally constructed, imagined world.

What is almost comical in the situation in this case is that Dmitri’s suspicion immediately infects the old man. They are cut from the same cloth. As the chapter heading says: They are two “sensualists.” Fyodor Pavlovich is also suddenly convinced that Grushenka is in the house, and he completely loses his head, just like his son: “He was choking. He was not expecting Grushenka at the time, and the sudden news that she was here made him beside himself. He was trembling all over. He seemed frantic” (127).

Another example of Dmitri’s free floating emotions is the attack and humiliation of staff captain Snegiryov. The episode is recounted several times in the novel. Katerina Ivanovna tells Alyosha about it, and the background is plainly diffuse and emotional: “Dmitri Fyodorovich somehow lost his temper with this captain…” (176). He drags him into the street by his beard while the captain’s little son watches and runs after them, begging for his father. He is crying and asks everyone to defend his father, but they only laugh. Katerina Ivanovna is clear in her judgement: “…one of those actions of which only Dmitri Fyodorovich would be capable in his anger . . . and in his passions!” (176–77). In the quarrel with his

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15. Free floating feelings are “completely unattached to any particular thing, situation or idea.” See Oatley 2004, 65.
father, Dmitri himself admitted that “I behaved like a brute to that captain,” but the reason, according to Dmitri was that Fyodor Pavlovich had used the captain as a messenger to Grushenka. So from his own point of view, Dmitri’s action is certainly not without cause, but the violence and humiliation he subjects the captain to is totally out of proportion to the cause he gives. His feelings got the upper hand: “… and I regret it now, and I’m disgusted with myself for my brutal rage” (63). From Katerina Ivanovna’s reaction, we understand that this is typical for Dmitri; he is the only one who would think up something like this; he is not capable of controlling his feelings. We encounter both the staff captain and the little boy later in Book X “The Boys.” The little boy is Ilyusha, who dies towards the end of the novel, and for whom Alyosha holds a memorial speech on the novel’s last pages.

In the two days leading up to the murder of Fyodor Pavlovich, Dmitri behaves so totally out of his mind that he himself in retrospect admits that he “might easily have fallen ill with brain fever.” The narrator says he was “in a condition of feverish agitation” and “literally rushing in all directions” (342). Later, during the trial, no fewer than two doctors testify that he must have been ill. The local physician Herzenstube declares that “the abnormality of the defendant’s mental faculties was self evident,” and the specialist summoned from Moscow considers “the defendant’s mental condition abnormal to ‘the highest degree.’ He uses concepts like ‘aberration’ and ‘mania,’ … ‘condition of aberration for several days…”’ (637–38). (A third physician says something entirely different, emphasizing Dostoevsky’s obvious parody of the medical profession.) Dmitri’s state of mind is characterized by his feeling that he must salvage his honor vis-à-vis Katerina Ivanovna and pay back the 3000 rubles he has acquired from her. At the same time, he must have the money ready in case Grushenka comes to him; they would then run far away together to begin a new life. He rushes about and seeks out various people to give him the 3000, first Kuzma, then the “bird dog” and finally Madame Khokhlakov. Each time he manages to goad himself to believe in his plan. There is hardly sense in his intention, but Dmitri has no problem in abandoning himself wholly to the belief that he will succeed; he seems just as enthusiastic every time. He is in the power of his feelings, and they shape for him a world in which things are assumed to happen as he wishes them to. It is an imaginary world created by strong emotions and a trusting mind. None of those he visits, and scarcely any readers, would think of taking him seriously. The motivation driving the events of the novel are at this point in time solely Dmitri’s overwrought emotions. He is propelled from impulse to impulse, “…he felt suddenly convinced that she would not refuse…” without rational reflection (360). The events in the novel do not
Home again after the unsuccessful effort to collect money, jealousy gets the upper hand once more, and Dimitri rushes to Fyodor Pavlovich’s house to check if Grushenka is there. It is here that Dostoevsky reveals himself as a true crime fiction author. At all decisive points in the circumstances surrounding the crime case, he uses narrative ellipses which contribute to maintaining the suspense, and which are not filled in until the elucidation of the case during the judicial proceedings. Everything we have come to know earlier in the novel bears a part in making Dimitri the likely culprit. Now the author places him at the scene of the crime with a potential murder weapon in his hand, and has him think the following: “Perhaps I shall not kill him, perhaps I shall. I’m afraid he’ll suddenly be so loathsome to me at that moment, with that face of his.” The paragraph closes in this way, “This personal repulsion was growing unendurable. Mitya was beside himself. He suddenly pulled the brass pestle out of his pocket.” A lacuna in the action marked by the strategic placement of a wider than normal paragraph spacing follows this sentence, and the suspense is not greatly lessened when the next paragraph begins, “God was watching over me then” (370). Just as strategically placed, but less clearly marked in the text is an ellipsis which appears a few pages later. For several paragraphs we have heard how desperate Dimitri is in his search for money. He has had to borrow small sums to travel around to possible lenders. The descriptions have been detailed and exhaustive. Then suddenly: “Pyotr Ilyich grew more and more surprised; he suddenly caught sight of a bundle of bills in Mitya’s hand …” (374). Neither Pyotr nor the reader receives any explanation. This is an episode that will play a decisive role during the trial, where two different explanations are given. For the time being, the reader remains in uncertainty.

The reader (and Alyosha) have by this time learned that Grushenka has left for the neighboring town to meet her old Polish flame from five years earlier. As soon as Dmitri learns this, the action moves rapidly and the increase in suspense toward a narrative climax begins. Joseph Frank appears to believe that from the moment he learns that Grushenka has left to meet her former lover, Dmitri undergoes a character transformation. Instead of jealousy of his father, a code of honor goes into effect which causes Dmitri to “step aside” to avoid ruining the chosen woman’s happiness (Frank 2002, 650ff). To me this interpretation seems surprising, especially in the light of what Dimitri actually does in the ensuing hours. It is true that he several times thinks “I won’t stand in her way. I’ll step aside, I know how to step aside” (Dostoevsky, 374). It is also emphasized that he feels not the least jealousy towards his new rival. The narrator places Mitya’s thoughts in quo-
tation marks; he thinks, amongst other thoughts “Step aside, Mitya, and make way!” But then the narrator writes “These words would roughly have expressed his feelings, if he had been capable of reasoning. But he could not reason at that moment.” In other words, it is the narrator and not Dimitri who is thinking these thoughts. Dimitri is in chaos, “…confusion in his soul, an agonizing confusion” (387). He is still in the power of his feelings, and when he says he knows how to step aside, it concerns a spontaneous resolution to take his own life. What a peculiar way to “step aside” when what he actually does is to set off after Grushenka with a team of horses at full gallop in the middle of the night. He loads up enough wares for an entire orgy, a repetition of the big party he and Grushenka had when they met the first time – there in Mokroe. There is no doubt that Dimitri at this moment has decided to commit suicide, but that his conduct in the ensuing hours would be a way of leaving the lovers alone in their happiness, makes little sense. Dimitri is just as impetuous and just as chaotic in his feelings as he has always been. His actions are those of desperation. He turns up with all his wine and champagne and invades the lovers’ company, invites singers and dancers, and initiates the wildest orgy. It becomes apparent that during the night he outstrips his rival and wins Grushenka back. He abandons the idea of taking his life.

The entire orgy should be understood in light of a very specific passionate emotion in Dimitri, perhaps the core emotion in his personality: the love of life. “I love life. I’ve loved life too much, shamefully much” (383). One could say from a mythical perspective that we are faced with a Dionysus motif. Both the first and second of Dimitri’s orgies are a type of Dionysian celebration of worshipping, celebrating and abandoning oneself to life’s vital forces, beyond morality and reason. These vital forces appeal strongly to Grushenka, as she is depicted in the novel as more or less a representative of these very life forces, often without moral scruples. This is above all what Grushenka, Dmitri and Fyodor Pavlovich have in common. They are in the power of life’s vital forces; they love sensuality, eroticism, power, conflict and violence and do not let themselves be controlled by the inhibiting power of morality, social considerations or politeness. They love life, its vital forces, primeval urges that cannot be socialized. I do not believe that Dimitri’s actions this last night before he is arrested represents a transformation of his personality. He is not a noble lover who “steps aside” for his conquering rival because of a romantic code of honor. He is a lover of life in the power of feelings,

who wishes to burn his life out in one night, in a boundless Dionysian fest and then take his leave.

People with strong Dionysian urges will naturally enough always be in conflict with the well regulated social community, such as Fyodor Pavlovich, Dmitri and Grushenka are. In order for a society to function, uninhibited vitality must be channeled, regulated and brought under social control. Fyodor Pavlovich will not accept this, and therefore the community calls him a “buffoon” and a “fool.” He loses his head and becomes violent if anyone denies him the expression of his vitality. Grushenka, who loves putting her sexuality in play, is also referred to in her surroundings by means of insults. We have seen too that Dimitri fails in finding a balance between strong desire, uncontrolled emotions and eruptive vitality on the one hand, and society’s rules of the game on the other. But he obviously has an understanding of what the surrounding social community expects of him. He realizes that these are expectations that he is incapable of complying with. Therefore he passes judgement on himself, his life: “I punish myself for my whole life, my whole life I punish!” he writes in his suicide note (380). Here he allows the Apollonian and societal standards to judge his life, his vitality. From this perspective, it makes sense that Dimitri on the whole is depicted as a person in the power of his feelings, all the time in conflict or vexatious contact with the social community. Emotions are the expression of Dionysian urges; emotions are physical, bodily, sensual expressions of life. They are not guided by reflection or reason. Their driving force is a burning, consuming and primordial love of all of life. So it makes good sense that in Dostoevsky’s novel, this primary emotionality is not just dealt with as a theme among others. It is integrated in the novel’s style as a narrative force. Emotions are the story’s primary motivations. Emotions are not just responses or additions to the social world; emotions shape the world for Dimitri; they initiate action, and do not function merely as reactions to events.

Narratologically, it must be possible to establish concepts for Dimitri’s affective pattern. Distinctions pertaining to the affective sources of stimuli, temporality, and patterns of progression must be included in such an inventory of concepts. In Affective Narratology, Patrick Colm Hogan utilizes four distinctive concepts in the scope of narrative happenings, namely incidents, events, episodes and stories. It appears that the concepts are meant to describe the extent of time or duration of a happening, not the dimensions of discourse. It is also clear that the descriptions concern epic occurrences, not emotional incidents. Epic and emotional events are construed by Hogan as tightly intertwined in such a way that the first evokes the second. This makes sense as long as the literary reference is the psychological portrayals in Tolstoy. However, Dostoevsky’s psychology is more complex than Tolstoy’s, and
therefore there is a need for other angles of thought and ideas, including a use for concepts that can depict affective events that lack any obvious epic impetus.

With regard to the sources of impulses or stimuli, it is necessary to distinguish between an outer, epic type and an inner variant. Inner sources of stimuli can be of differing kinds, for example, memories, fantasies, dreams, hysteria, hallucinations, expectations, schemes and projects, and perhaps one should also include ideologies. Not all of these possible variants are represented in Dostoevsky, but Dimitri demonstrates on several occasions that he is affectively guided by inner sources of stimuli such as fantasies and schemes. Sometimes his reactions assume an almost pathological character. We see this also in other characters in the novel. Hysteria is an often occurring impetus source, especially for female characters. To be sure, hysterical attacks can often have an outer, instigating cause, as, for example, in the meeting between Katerina Ivanovna and Grushenka in Book III. But when a hysterical attack is initially released, the inner emotional burden will usually cause the affective course to be self perpetuating. Another favorite Dostoevsky phenomenon is the “fever fantasy.” The phenomenon is often described in a way that makes it difficult to decide to what extent it is a matter of a fever that evokes fantasies, or if it is tense emotional anxiety that leads to fever. A dramatic example in The Brothers Karamazov of a pathological condition in which the inner source of stimulus breaks out in powerful affective hallucinations is Ivan’s breakdown in Book XI, where he is visited by the Devil.

In addition to distinctions with respect to sources of stimuli, it is necessary to differentiate between variants of duration. Here other concepts than Hogan’s are needed, since purely affective events are to be described. Whether the impulse is of outer or inner nature, one could imagine the following concepts for differing degrees of duration: reaction, feeling, mood, temperament, attitude to life – and it could also be appropriate at this time to incorporate ideology as a variant of attitude to life. Dimitri’s attitude is to a high degree guided by desire and sensuality, that is to say by changeable affects of short – albeit recurring – duration. When it’s a matter of patterns of progression, many emotional segments and many changes are involved. The intensity is most often high, and the typical pattern of development is escalation, usually towards a scandal, a crisis or a catastrophe. Organic muting is rare. Flickering or oscillating between emotions is more common than ambivalence. In toto, one can say that Dimitri is guided just as much by inner as by outer stimulus sources. He is lacking in types of affects with high duration. Instead, he is to a great degree impelled by reactions, feelings and moods. Of course one could say that this is so common that it constitutes a temperament, and accordingly that a lack of stability is precisely a durable personality feature.
Ivan Fyodorovich

Ivan Fyodorovich is mainly described in Book V (III, IV, V), in Book XI, which has the title “Brother Ivan Fyodorovich,” and in Book XII, in the subdivision “A Sudden Catastrophe” (V). The three chapters in Book V are, as several scholars have called attention to, obvious parallels to Book III (III, IV, V). In Book III Dimitri speaks with Alyosha and pronounces his “confession of an ardent heart;” in Book V Ivan does the same. What is special about Ivan’s contribution is that two of the three sections have gained an autonomous standing in world literature, almost separate from the novel as a whole, namely Ivan’s rebellion against God and “The Grand Inquisitor.” Therefore they appear in some literary research as more of Dostoevsky’s creation than as Ivan’s ideas. Leonid Grossman asserts for that matter that Ivan is the only one of Dostoevsky’s characters who could have written his work (Grossman 1974, 582). It is striking that these special contributions to world literature were presented at a tavern, “The Metropolis” in the marketplace, while “waiters were continually dashing to and fro” and there was “the usual bustle going on…there were shouts for the waiters, the sound of bottles being opened, the click of billiard balls, the drone of the organ” (Dostoevsky, 210).

A surprising aspect of literary research about Ivan is the widespread conception that he represents rationality, logic and cool intellectual reason. I have already mentioned Richard Peace, who writes that in Ivan [we have] “the intellect” (Peace 1971, 229) and Konstantin Mochulsky who states that “the principle of reason is embodied in Ivan: he is a logician and rationalist …” (Mochulsky 1967, 597–98). Leonid Grossman also accentuates Ivan’s “brilliant and creative intellect” (Grossman 1974, 578). Joseph Frank places Ivan amongst Dostoevsky’s “young intellectuals” and calls him “the coldly conceptual and distant Ivan” even though he also attaches importance to the inner conflict in Ivan’s mind between an ardent thirst for life and cold intellectualism. (Frank 2002, 576, 601). Peace reinforces his viewpoint by calling Ivan’s mind “a mind which is essentially mathematical and ‘Euclidian’, and the logic of his ‘Rebellion’ is that a minus cancels out a plus; that the negative evidence of human suffering is stronger than the most positive sign of human happiness” (Peace 1971, 276). Mochulsky goes the farthest in his characterization:

In Ivan we find completed the age-old development of the philosophy of reason from Plato to Kant … “Man is a rational being” – this axiom has entered his flesh and blood. Ivan is proud of his reason and for him it is easier to renounce God’s world than reason. If the world is not justified by reason, it is
impossible to accept it. The rationalist does not want to be reconciled with a kind of “nonsense.” Here begins the tragedy: rational consciousness finds no meaning in the world-order. In the world there is an irrational principle, evil and suffering, which is impervious to reason. (Mochulsky 1973, 615)

Ivan’s self-image is completely different. When he introduces himself to Alyosha in the chapter, “The Brothers get Acquainted,” he identifies himself most closely with the irrational and vital thirst for life: “I have a longing for life, and I go on living in spite of logic” (Dostoevsky, 211. Italics mine) and continues:

Though I may not believe in the order of the universe, yet I love the sticky little leaves as they open in spring. I love the blue sky. I love some people, whom one loves you know sometimes without knowing why. I love some great deeds done by men, though I’ve long ceased perhaps to have faith in them, yet from old habit one’s heart prizes them. (211)

Ivan describes his thirst for life as “a feature of the Karamazovs.” “It’s not a matter of intellect or logic, it’s loving with one’s inside.” Ivan is clear that this is only one side of himself. He believes that his thirst for life is so strong because he is still in “the first strength of one’s youth” (212). When he turns thirty, he reckons that destructive forces will have the upper hand:

17. The most peculiar image of Ivan is advanced by Victor Terras in his otherwise useful book A Karamazov Companion. Commentary on the Genesis. Language and Style of Dostoevsky’s Novel (1981). He does not produce an effort to understand the character, but rather a total condemnation of him based on, as far as I can see, a Christian ideological basis. Ivan is identified most closely with the Devil figure he is visited by in his hallucinations while ill. In his zeal to overcome what Ivan represents in the novel, Terras undermines the very approach to the problem that Ivan introduces, and by which the entire history of the reception of the novel has been conducted, a history of reception that starts with the little brother Alyosha. Ivan’s rebellion against God on behalf of the innocent suffering children, is brushed aside by Terras with the following: “Its pathos seems sincere, but there are telltale signs that Ivan does not really care about the children whose sufferings he describes so eloquently” (91). What these “signs” might be, we are not enlightened. Terras is not shaken, as his ideal character Alyosha is. Terras also offhandedly rejects one of the masterpieces of world literature, the legend of “The Grand Inquisitor”: “The point, missed by many critics, is that ‘The Grand Inquisitor’ is not a good poem, and when everything is said and done, not very good rhetoric either” (92). Sigmund Freud wrote about the same text: “The Brothers Karamazov is the most magnificent novel ever written; the episode of the Grand Inquisitor, one of the peaks in the literature of the world, can hardly be valued too highly” (Freud, Sigmund. 1962. “Dostoevsky and Parricide” in Dostoevsky. A Collection of Critical Essays. René Wellek, ed. Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice Hall, 98).
...that if I didn’t believe in life, if I lost faith in the woman I love, lost faith in the order of things, were convinced in fact that everything is a disorderly, damnable, and perhaps devil-ridden chaos, if I were struck by every horror of man’s disillusionment – still I should want to live and, having once tasted of the cup, I would not turn away from it till I had drained it! At thirty, though, I shall be sure to leave the cup, even if I’ve not emptied it, and turn away – where I don’t know. But till I am thirty, I know that my youth will triumph over everything – every disillusionment, every disgust with life. I’ve asked myself many times whether there is in the world any despair that would overcome this frantic and perhaps unseemly thirst for life in me, and I’ve come to the conclusion that there isn’t, that is till I am thirty, and then I shall lose it of myself, I fancy. (211)

I do not think it is reasonable to identify Ivan’s inclination to self-destruction as rational, logical or sensible either. Ivan is more than anything else an ambivalent character with strong urges in diametrically opposite directions; he is characterized by a thirst for life and a death drive. It is clearly a question of relatively durable emotional states. They are both present at the same time, and they become part of a sequence or a script, as Ivan himself observes: The thirst for life belongs to youth, the death drive becomes dominant later. Temporality in Ivan’s emotional pattern is therefore appreciably differentiated from Dimitri’s. Types of emotion with a high degree of duration are dominant in Ivan. He is more stable than his brother and has greater control over emotional impulses. However this changes dramatically towards the end of the novel’s plot when Ivan’s personality disintegrates, to which we shall return.

The mixture of an appetite for life and the death drive is a clear common feature in the brothers Dimitri and Ivan, and both of these traits are affective in nature. I cannot see that it is especially pertinent to place these two characters in completely different categories by means of characteristics such as emotion vs. intellect, or sensuality vs. reason. Having said that, it is naturally appropriate to point out that there are also huge differences between the two brothers. The combination of thirst for life and a death drive shows itself in Dimitri primarily as wavering or oscillation, in Ivan as ambivalence. Temperamentally, Dimitri appears as a spontaneously reacting, eruptive personality type, quick tempered and having poor impulse control. Dimitri both reacts and acts before affects have a chance to come in contact with the cognitive layer of his personality. He travels along “the low road” a great deal. In Ivan there is a much tighter link between affect and cognition. His affects form a part of less spontaneous, more reflective connections with the rest of his personality. He travels more along “the high road.”
As I see it, Ivan is just as controlled by affects as Dimitri, even if his temperament and cognitive functions are different. His famous rebellion against God certainly does not depend on cool, logical rationality. At the root of his attitude to life, as it is expressed in his conversation with Alyosha, lies strong compassion. The motivation behind Ivan’s renunciation of God’s world is his pain over the suffering of children. It is misleading to regard the suffering of children as an intellectual argument in a logical train of thought leading to atheism, as Frank does (Frank 2002, 605). It is rather the case of an affect so strong that it sets everything else aside – even consideration of his own salvation. On this point, Albert Camus is clear: “Ivan incarnates the refusal of salvation” (Camus 1953, 51). Ivan refuses God’s organization of the world because no future harmony can justify the suffering of children here and now. If it is the case that God’s world order and a forthcoming heavenly paradise are to be defrayed by innocent children’s suffering in the present, Ivan’s judgement is crystal clear. That is a world order that he cannot accept. It is not God’s existence per se that he is rejecting; it is God’s world order. Ivan judges God’s order of the world on an ethical basis, and he places ethics above divinity. What is radical about this, as Camus says, is that Ivan’s rejection holds even if he should be mistaken. He simply does not agree that people who have torn small children to pieces, impaled them with bayonets, let dogs hunt them and eat them, should be able to be forgiven. Camus says:

Ivan’s deepest scream, the one that opens the most overwhelming abysses under the rebel’s steps, is the same, even if: “My indignation would persist even if I were wrong.” It means that even if God existed, even if the mystery cloaked a truth, even if the Russian elder was right, Ivan would not accept that that truth was paid for by evil, suffering and death inflicted on the innocent.

(Camus 1951, n.p.)

It is fitting to point out Camus’ choice of words when he comments on this point in Ivan’s conversation with Alyosha. He calls it a scream that opens up overwhelming abysses. It centers around strong emotionally charged expressions.

We are encountering an affective ethics that is similar to Søren Kierkegaard’s fundamental question in what I shall in this book call an affective philosophy. In Fear and Trembling Kierkegaard asks: “Is there a teleological suspension of the ethical?” His answer is clearly “yes.” Ivan’s answer is just as clearly “no.” Characteristic for both of them is that the question is evaluated through the suffering of

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18. See the chapter on Kierkegaard in this book.
innocent children. In the case of Kierkegaard, it is a question of Abraham’s sacrifice of his son Isaac. Abraham’s loyalty towards God’s world order is so total that he is willing to kill his own son. But Kierkegaard makes it easy on himself by responding to a mythical story. Abraham is spared from carrying out the killing because he shows such great fealty. Ivan, and Dostoevsky, relate documented accounts of actual acts of tyranny and murder of innocent children, children who were not spared. Therefore Ivan answers a resounding No to Kierkegaard’s question: There is no “teleological suspension” of assault against children.

Towards the end of the novel, Ivan is overtaken by his affective ethics. The rebellion against God has, as far as Ivan is concerned, led to a nihilistic ideological outlook. Without God, “everything is permitted,” he claims. He asserts this face-to-face with Smerdyakov who takes it to heart and murders Fyodor Pavlovich. In a series of meetings between Ivan and Smerdyakov it is revealed that Smerdyakov believes that he has simply carried out the murder for Ivan. Ivan is the actual guilty one. This explicit accusation corresponds with an inner self-accusation that Ivan has already struggled with for a long time, and that Alyosha has noticed almost clairvoyantly. Ivan’s ethical dilemma becomes a powerful contributory cause of the disintegration of his personality towards the end of the novel – it is a complete mental breakdown with great alterations in the affective pattern.

Over all, it is natural to interpret the breakdown as a result of the fundamental ambivalence in Ivan’s personality which Zosima had already called attention to in the beginning of the novel. As has been referred to earlier, Zosima claims that “you don’t believe your own arguments, and with an aching heart mock at them inwardly …” Ivan perpetually carries a “great grief” according to Zosima (Dostoevsky, 61). The burden of this oppressive grief becomes too much for Ivan.

When the breakdown begins, it expresses itself especially as changes in the affective pattern. Ivan loses more and more control over impulses, feelings and ideas. “He’s mad. Don’t you know that he’s mad? He is in a fever, nervous fever,” Katerina Ivanovna tells Alyosha (567). He has become irascible, the usual politeness slips away, and he assumes an aggressive disposition. He loses his self-control, and “All his restraint suddenly vanished” (569). The distinction between reality and fantasy disappears gradually. There are obvious affective signs: inner sources of stimuli take dominance to an abnormal degree. Perhaps at first it is a matter of “fever, nervous fever,” as Katerina Ivanovna says, but it soon develops to the stage of serious hallucinations. Ivan experiences prolonged visits from the Devil. In the sub-division’s English translation the chapter is called “The devil. Ivan Fyodorovich’s nightmare,” but it is not a question of a dream while asleep. According to the narrator, an experienced physician has already warned that
Ivan’s condition is prone to hallucinations. Ivan himself has an inkling of what is happening, but he has no possibility to take control of the situation. He is in the power of inner sources of stimuli.

In addition, he experiences “low road” reactions that manifest themselves physically without control. “Suddenly Ivan began trembling all over, and clutched Alyosha’s shoulder” (570). A little later: “Something seems to give way in his brain, and he shuddered all over with a cold shiver” (590). He experiences quivering so intense that he can hardly talk. When he is testifying during the trial, he gives such a confusing impression that no one takes him seriously, despite his producing the 3000 rubles Dimitri was to have stolen from his father when he ostensibly murdered him. He had gotten the money from Smerdyakov, the actual murderer. However, Ivan is not capable of conveying Smerdyakov’s confession in a comprehensible and reliable way. Smerdyakov confessed the same night he committed suicide, and the same night that Ivan was visited by the Devil. Ivan’s testimony ends when he knocks down the bailiff, and is removed by the police. His breakdown provokes an attack of hysterics from Katerina Ivanovna, and leads to her giving her second and crushing deposition. She is therefore one of the trigger figures in the portrayal of Ivan’s breakdown, together with Alyosha and Smerdyakov.

Alexey Fyodorovich

Alyosha is introduced in the novel, as are his brothers, in the introductory Book I, and is moreover discussed in his own Book VII, “Alyosha.” Nevertheless, Alyosha’s status in the novel is different than his brothers’. In the first place, his individual history is much less dramatic than his brothers’. Secondly, he is a vehicle for carrying much of the author’s message and, to a great extent, that centers around being devoted to others rather than himself. So the focus is often on other people when Alyosha is on the scene. In the third place, Alyosha functions narratologically as an assistant to the narrator. He flits here and there and is present at a series of events, so the narrator can use him as an escort to relate what happens in his company. The other characters trust him in a special way. They entrust their most candid thoughts and feelings to him. This happens in a series of pivotal dialogues in the novel, where Alyosha is almost always the one who listens. In a few cases this is quite explicitly the message in the text. When Dimitri reveals his confessions, he says: “You shall keep quiet and I’ll go on talking, for the time has come” (93). These dialogues give the narrator the opportunity to relate for the reader what is transpiring in the inner lives of the central characters. Alyosha is the novel’s – and the rest of the novel’s characters’ – model character, but his conduct almost always
turns away from himself, in the direction of empathy and insight into the lives of others. On the concrete plane of action he is a remarkable figure who more or less permanently runs errands for other characters in the novel, has meetings with them, receives their confidences, and then rushes on to the next encounter. He is the closest substitute one could have for the romantic “omniscient narrator.” Konstantin Mochulsky writes: “The youngest of the Karamazov brothers, Alyosha, is drawn more palely than the others. His personal theme is suppressed by Dmitry’s passionate pathos and Ivan’s ideational dialectics” (Mochulsky 1967, 626).

The depiction of Alyosha is also different from that of his brothers in the sense that the social plays a much more important role in his life experiences. Both Dimitri and Ivan have the tendency of being trapped in their own minds. Both have problems with, even lose, the connection to outer reality in powerful affective situations. They have a solipsistic predisposition in their personalities. Alyosha lives above all in the world, among people. To gain a correct impression of him, it is necessary to take seriously the fact that he is portrayed in social environments, first as a part of the monastery’s religious community, subsequently as the pivotal figure in the building of a youth organization outside of the monastery. Ivan says of himself that he has no friends. Dimitri is, per se, socially inclined, but he is portrayed primarily in surroundings of orgiastic carousals, populated with drunkards, hired choristers, dancers, and similarly disposed people. In everyday life he often behaves in a way that scares people away from him. He does not seem to have any close attachment relationships to anyone – definitely not to his fiancée or to his family. The exception is, as for most, Alyosha.

With the role that Alyosha plays in the novel, as the confidant of most of the others, and with the qualities he demonstrates, unselfish humanitarianism, sincerity, and compassion, he functions as perhaps the most important trigger figure in the story. His empathy and his reactions to the condition of others give clear indications in many situations about the affective condition of pivotal characters, and thereby also give implicit “instructions” to the reader about how the conditions are supposed to be read. As a fundamental type in Dostoevsky’s gallery of persons he is reminiscent of Netochka in Netochka Nezvanova, and he has features in common with Prince Myshkin in The Idiot. Netochka was focused towards one or a few persons at a time, and became completely absorbed in their existence, situations in their lives, and well-being. Her own existence appeared quite subordinate, even to herself. Alyosha is a more mature and more richly endowed figure, but he too seems to become so intensely absorbed in the existence of others that it is difficult to see what kind of life of his own he has. At the beginning of the novel he is a novice in the monastery, and one must imagine that his life is concerned with
cloister routines and preparations for the life of a monk. In this phase the person
he focuses on is the Elder Zosima. But Zosima believes that Alyosha’s mission is
out in the world, and with Zosima’s death, Alyosha leaves the monastery. The
number of pivotal persons then expands appreciatively, and it becomes even more
difficult to ascertain Alyosha’s plan for his own life. His attentiveness and interest
are to an even higher degree than before directed towards the lives of others and
their situations. Only at the end of the novel, in the epilogue, when Alyosha speaks
at Ilyusha’s funeral, can one suspect a new and personal life project for him. He
tells the young boys that he is going to leave the town, perhaps for a long time.
The “paleness” in the portrayal of Alyosha may be attributed to the fact that Dos-
toevsky had plans to write a sequel to *The Brothers Karamazov*, in which he would
expand the role of his “hero,” Alyosha. Such a novel was never written, thus there
is something “unfinished” in the characterization of Alyosha.

There are many examples of Alyosha’s function as an emotional trigger figure
in the novel. The most striking is perhaps his reaction in connection with Ivan’s
rebellion against God. Alyosha’s reaction to the affective intensity in the situation
and the ethical power in Ivan’s explanation is indicated to the reader by the fact
that the deep and sincerely devout monastery novice is swept along to the degree
that he agrees with the religious rebel in his case against God. Even Alyosha can-
not agree that humanity’s “eternal joy” can be bought for a price that includes tor-
ture, abuse and murder of innocent children. There is no doubt that Alyosha is seri-
ously shaken by Ivan’s rejection of God. In the same way, he is shaken and moved
by the circumstances of life and existential state of the other persons in the novel.

The event that most directly touches the course of Alyosha’s own life is the death
of the Elder Zosima. The sorrow over his death is one thing, and it appears that Aly-
osha has been prepared for this and manages it well. The problem is the expecta-
tions of a miracle in connection with the death of the holy man, and the reaction in
the milieu when the miracle fails to materialize. Many had believed that God’s
pleasure with the Elder’s pious life would become apparent by the body’s resistance
to the putrefaction of death. Instead, the Elder’s body begins to decompose quite
quickly, and several people interpret the smell of the corpse as an expression of
God’s displeasure. The Elder’s enemies in the monastery and the religious commu-
nity take advantage of this. Alyosha perceives it as deeply unjust that God places
this card in the hands of the Elder’s enemies, so to say, and his reaction is strongly
affective. In the description of his reactions, Rakitin acts as the trigger figure:

> It had begun to get dusk when Rakitin, crossing the pine copse from the her-
mitage to the monastery, suddenly noticed Alyosha, lying face downwards on
the ground under a tree, not moving and apparently asleep. He went up and called him by his name. “You here, Alexey? Can you have …” he began wondering but broke off. He had meant to say, “Can you have come to this?” Alyosha did not look at him, but from a slight movement Rakitin at once saw that he heard and understood him. . . . Alyosha raised his head, sat up and leaned his back against the tree. He was not crying but there was a look of suffering and irritability in his face. (319).

Alyosha’s reaction is so intense that he quite simply quotes Ivan and his formulation of the rebellion against God when he expresses his reactions: “I am not rebelling against my God; I simply ‘don’t accept His world.’ Alyosha suddenly smiled a forced smile” (319). Alyosha’s affective reaction appears to be of a different kind than Dmitri’s, perhaps it more closely resembles Ivan’s. In the case of both Ivan and Alyosha, reflexive consciousness is an essential and integrated part of the affects. The affects of Dmitri – and Fyodor Pavlovich – seem more spontaneous and immediate. However in all cases the affects are powerful ones.

The difference between these two dissimilar patterns of reaction can probably be described partly by means of a typological differentiation which Patrick Colm Hogan refers to in Affective Narratology. He discusses the “appraisal theory of emotion” (Keith Oatley is representative) vs. the “perception theory of emotion,” as associated with Joseph LeDoux. Hogan is concerned with attempting a synthesis of the two. He describes the appraisal theory like this: “Appraisal accounts of emotion begin from the fact that we do not respond emotionally to simple perceptual facts. Rather, we respond emotionally to facts with a certain meaning or significance, facts interpreted in a certain way” (Hogan 2011, 43).

And the perception theory is described thusly: “… we respond to certain perceptual experiences very quickly. Indeed, in at least some cases, our emotional responses appear to be governed by precisely those aspects of experience that we do not judge, evaluate, or appraise” (45). Hogan refers especially to LeDoux and his explanation of a neurological “low road” directly from the senses to the body. The perception theory allows for “three different modalities for emotion elicitation: current perceptions, recollection and imagination” (48). Hogan asserts that the contrast between a cognitively based theory (Oatley) and a perceptual theory (LeDoux) is a misguided dispute. In the first place because “even the most minimal innate sensitivity involves some shaping of experience by the neurocognitive architecture, even though it does not involve elaborate cortical processing,” and secondly, “even if the emotion activation is itself perceptual, not inferential, inferences and other forms of elaborative cognitive processing are perhaps the primary
means by which we experience imagined emotion triggers and emotion memories” (ibid.). Moreover, we are speaking of seconds or fractions of a second before a perception via the “low road” becomes processed by the cognitive system and brought onto the “high road.” It is tempting to add that Hogan himself does not give very convincing explanations of the perceptual theory’s rationale for why we react differently to current, actual sensory stimuli and to imaginative ones or memories. In a narratological context these are questions that are especially relevant on the reader’s side. It seems strange to exclude the cognitive system when one, on the one hand, wishes to explain why we react affectively to fictional narratives – and on the other hand, why the reactions nevertheless are separated from feelings in actual situations. “Crucially, in the perceptual model, the fictionality of the work is irrelevant,” writes Hogan. “Our desire is a real desire” (56). But, as Hogan himself asks, if we are watching a film and “a lion jumps out on the screen, why do we not run from the theater…?” (56). He gives an unsatisfactory answer to this. From a common sense perspective, it appears quite obvious that the reason must be because we know we are at the movies. We are emotionally affected, but we are still conscious of fiction.

The point in Alyosha’s case is that we encounter a type of affective reaction where the cognitive plays a completely decisive role. At the death of the Elder, it is not primarily a question of immediate reactions of grief; Alyosha’s entire religious consciousness is involved, his faith, “Indeed, all his trouble came from the fact that he was of great faith” (Dostoevsky, 316). In addition, the theological interpretations of Zosima’s death by his religious adversaries played a conclusive part. We are confronted with what Hogan calls “awareness of the way events interact with goals – often quite long-term goals – in the development of emotions” (Hogan, 42). Alyosha’s long-term goal in the current situation is “the higher justice” (Dostoevsky, 317) for Zosima’s entire mission in life. He had had aims and expectations of a miracle at Zosima’s bier because he believed in justice for his spiritual guide. That expectation was violated and Alyosha feels cut to the quick. His emotions are tightly linked to aims and expectations that to a high degree involve cognitive processes.

In conformity with Ivan’s affective reactions, Alyosha’s are more of the “appraisal” type than of the “perception” type. For Dimitri and Fyodor Pavlovich quite the opposite is the case, even if for these two “sensualists” there is also a clear objective involved in their otherwise quite impulsive patterns of reaction: they both want Grushenka.
DOSTOEVSKY AND AFFECTIVE NARRATOLOGY

Dostoevsky was an author with a wholly distinctive eye for affective patterns in his literary main characters. There is no doubt that he wrote from religious and ideological concerns, which can be read about especially in his journalistic writings. But there are clear traces of the author’s political, cultural and religious points of view in his novels as well. However, it is likely that Dostoevsky the writer would have been less well remembered today if his work were dependent on the ideas characteristic of his period, rather than on the rich narrative artistry, the unsurpassed characterizations, and the psychology and affective peculiarity of the literary figures, which make Dostoevsky one of the foremost contributors to world literature.

In this chapter, the affective and emotional aspects of The Brothers Karamazov have been placed in focus, and the way in which they appear in Dostoevsky’s narrative art have led to some narratological considerations that I hope have a certain general validity. As a contribution to interpretation of Dostoevsky’s masterpiece, the chapter is concerned especially with the main characters’ affective personality patterns. It is also the case that in parts of his text Dostoevsky worked with affective elements as primary motivations in the narratological plot of the novel. It is not always epic elements that create the initiative in Dostoevsky’s narrative art. This chapter has the distinctive concern of adjusting the established picture of Ivan Fyodorovich and his ostensibly rationalistic, logical and coldly intellectual attitude to life. An analysis with the emphasis on affective systems shows that Ivan is just as emotionally or affectively guided as his half-brother Dmitri, even if his temperament is different. To underestimate Ivan’s affective pattern of reactions is a misguided but widespread interpretation. Taken together, the three Karamazov brothers provide a rich and comprehensive repertoire of affective systems. The female main characters are not as richly depicted. They too have complex affective patterns of reactions. They compete and are controlled by jealousy, in the same manner as Dimitri and Fyodor Pavlovich. But Dostoevsky appears to have a distinctively feminine category ready to explain much of the unpredictability of Katerina Ivanovna’s behavior: hysteria. And the change that occurs with the femme fatale character Grushenka after Dimitri’s arrest does not appear as well substantiated as the portrayal of the masculine characters’ development.

With a background in text analysis it has been possible to incrementally establish several concepts for phenomena that perhaps can have relevance beyond the concrete interpretation of the text. Perhaps classical narratology requires supplementation by means of a “postclassical” expansion of the apparatus of analytical concepts, making way for and including affective and emotional aspects of the...
complex art of narrative. At least that is what Patrick Colm Hogan advocates in his work *Affective Narratology*, to which I have referred several times in this article.

The standard narrative of narrative theory distinguishes between “classical” and “postclassical” narratology. Postclassical narratologists have certainly begun to draw on affective science in certain respects. Nonetheless, many fundamentals of narratology were set out in the founding works of classical narratology, which were often Structuralist in orientation. Many main figures of classical narratology – Genette, Greimas, Barthes, Todorov – were setting out to use Saussurean linguistics to understand narrative structure. Though this work was enormously valuable, it was embedded in linguistic theories that had nothing to say about emotion. In and of itself, this is not necessarily a problem. However, it tended to orient research programs in narratology toward issues and explanations that had little to do with emotion.

(Hogan 2011, 15–16)

In this reading of Dostoevsky, I have also attempted to give attention to a theoretically methodical concern and thereby contribute some tentative concepts in support of such a narratological supplementation project. They must likely pass the test by being applied to other material.

The suggested concepts relate both to spatial and temporal aspects of an affective narratology, but also to aspects which do not necessarily allow themselves to be placed in the context of such a distinction, for example, situations that concern the patterns of narrative progression. Some of the concepts are taken from others and adapted to the current analytical purpose, including further development directly on Hogan’s contribution, together with the established insights of psychologists such as Oatley and LeDoux.

*The emotional space* is often important in Dostoevsky’s novels, and will likely also have relevance to the work of other authors. The designation covers the narratological phenomenon that place or space where specific episodes or narrative sequences take place emerge as emotionally coded in one sense or another. It is not just a neutral receptacle for the emotional display of the acting characters. There are both micro- and macro-geographies. They can encode everything from concrete rooms in which people find themselves, to nations in which specific values or qualities are localized. The coding of emotional spaces can therefore occur by psychological as well as by ideological means. In most cases, it will probably be the case that the person’s emotionality and the coding of the emotional space will conform.
But one can, of course, also imagine different degrees of contrast, as what we see in the Karamazov clan’s visit to Zosima’s monastery cell. It is also possible to imagine special cases in which the emotional space emerges as dominant, and casts the individual emotionality aside. Just one example would be a theater of war.

The division between performative and analytical emotionality can be useful in many cases. A discrepancy between these aspects is an oft-occurring narrative tension. One variant would be a display of performative emotionality where the relevant participant lacks or does not express self-understanding, but where this lack is compensated for by another character or the narrator acting as analyst and disclosing or revealing emotional insight either for the reader alone or for both the reader and the relevant literary participant. This is what occurs in the case of Dostoevsky. It is probable that the most common case in modernist novels is that only performative emotionality is represented in the text, and that the analytical work is entrusted to the reader, such as it occurs in Hamsun’s *Hunger* and later works. A variant that likely has been more common in newer literature is an inversion of the Dostoevsky model, which consists of the depiction of a person with an active analytical emotionality, that is to say, a figure who is engaged in self analysis, but where the analytical plane is subverted by the performative and appears as a false introspection. Thus, while in Dostoevsky the relationship between the two aspects was distributed so that the analytical had authority, the opposite can be true in newer literature.

*Emotional trigger figures* are narrative indicators for the emotional charge in certain episodes or narrative sequences. They give situational responses and function as a third instance of authority for the reader, that is, they prescribe an adequate reader reaction. Emotional trigger figures can behave as unilateral or reciprocal. In Dostoevsky Alyosha is often pretty much a unilateral trigger figure. He is present as a listener, and is triggered by his conversational partner. But trigger figures can also appear as more equal in specific episodes, and appear as trigger figures for each other, as Dmitri and Fyodor Pavlovich do in the major argument at the monastery. Dostoevsky utilizes an active and extensive use of emotional trigger figures. In Hamsun’s *Hunger* the use of trigger figures is so sparse and circumspect that the reader receives only a few glimpses of understanding of the hero’s emotional condition through the regulating of a third authority, something that has a part in determining the “difficult” position of the reader in modernist literature. Dostoevsky makes it much easier for his reader precisely because of his use of emotional trigger figures.

*Scripts* and *causal attribution* are concepts borrowed partly from established psychology, partly from Patrick Colm Hogan’s *Affective Narratology*. The idea of
causal attribution represents a function that in my view is not specific to reading of emotional or affective aspects of a text. It is a matter of implicit processes that are active for reading in general. Partly these are functions that involve reception theory’s ideas about supplementing “empty spaces” in narratives, but directed specifically at causal lacunas. In an affective narratology this concept can be important because it often represents functions that are mobilized by what we can call the story’s enigmas. Such enigmas are usually included in representations of complex psychology, and often it is a matter of hidden or indeterminate elements that the narrative derives power from, but does not define. The concept causal attribution should probably be considered more as a description of a reading process rather than a result of reading, since it is not certain that reading will lead to an elucidation or revelation of the narrative’s empowering enigmas. But it contributes to creating suspense and uneasiness in the reading experience – in itself an enigmatic phenomenon.

The necessity for causal attribution can be provoked especially by emotional reactions of literary figures in cases where the emotions break with a present situation’s normalcy, that is, by deviation from ordinary expectations. Reactions can, for example, follow a script that one would usually expect in completely different situations. Script is a well established psychological concept for customary combinations of impulses and corresponding reactions in definite situations, reactions to danger, for example. Dimitri’s flight reaction at Zosima’s blessing is a striking example in Dostoevsky. His deeply felt joy at the reunion with Katerina Ivanovna after she has seen to it that he is sentenced to twenty years’ hard labor in Siberia is another example. Should we once again refer to Hamsun for a modernist example, the Hunger hero’s feelings of philanthropy, which causes him to give away his last few coins, functions as a good example.

In an affective narratological analysis it will often be useful to distinguish between different sources of stimuli. Among other things, it will be relevant to differentiate outer and inner sources. The normalcy in traditionally realistic novels is that the outer, epic events lead to emotional reactions, but sometimes the sources for stimuli of emotional reactions are of an inner character. They can be caused by different strata or sides of the personality or mentality. Usual elements are memories, fantasies, imaginings, dreams, hallucinations, expectations, plans, projects, perhaps also ideological opinions. In Dostoevsky, as well as with many of his contemporaries, it can also be a matter of hysteria, especially in women. Such typological specifications can be of a relatively banal nature in connection with specific text analysis, but one of the main intentions in choosing Dostoevsky as an example in this chapter is that his narratological peculiarities imply, among other
things, that inner sources of stimuli in long stretches of the story often control or
determine the narratological course. They have a dominant function – and also in
relation to outer, epic impetuses.

It will often be useful to be able to distinguish different forms of temporality in
connection with an affective narratology, such as is necessary with concepts for
different degrees of emotional duration. There are already established concepts for
this within psychology. Some of these are mentioned in the introduction to this
book with reference to Keith Oatley. However, I have felt the need for specify-
cations that make more allowances for the fact that in affective narratology, one
operates in a literary universe. My tentative suggestion is to make use of the fol-
lowing concepts for emotions with increasing degrees of duration: reaction, feel-
ing, mood, temperament, attitude to life and – an opening here for also including
ideology among the more durable emotionally determined factors. Not all of these
specifications have been used systematically in this analysis of the Dostoevsky
text, but they can be presumed to be of use in cases where such specifications are
analytically relevant.

In all narratological descriptions, plot patterns will have a place. It is also true
for an affective narratology. Depictions of affective plots will be able to utilize
ideas that resemble the usual plot descriptive concepts. Of course there will natu-
rally be a variation in how many itemizations there are a need for, but I suggest
the following variants: links, change-over, escalation, oscillation (wavering),
ambivalence and abatement. In addition, there will be a need for concepts such as
segmentation and sequentiality. However, detailed analyses of these types of phe-
nomena would be quite demanding in both time and space, so will in reality most
often only appear in the form of intimation.

There is reason to believe that affective narratology has a relevant position as a
supplement to classical narratology. My contribution here is meant simply as a
modest and preliminary proposal for development of some aspects of such a sub-
discipline.
Søren Kierkegaard as the “Affective Turn” in Philosophy?

Many philosophers have been interested in the role of emotions and affects in people’s lives. Among philosophers of our own time, Martha Nussbaum is one who has written most zealously and persistently about the meaning of feelings, and has attempted to give them cognitive and ethical value. In her major work Upheavals of Thought. The Intelligence of Emotions (2001), she resorts to the Stoics in order to anchor her points of view. Aristotle also plays a central role in her philosophy. The psychologist Keith Oatley traces his historical interpretation back to the Epicureans, and, like Nussbaum, to the Stoics. Important representatives of the twenty-first century’s so called “affective turn,” for example Brian Massumi and Eve Sedgwick build upon Spinoza, Bergson, Deleuze and Guattari to a large degree. But few philosophers have given emotions so central a place in their philosophy as Søren Kierkegaard. Two of his major works carry emotions in the title, Fear and Trembling from 1843 and The Concept of Anxiety from 1844. The Sickness unto Death can be named in the same context because this work deals with despair in two different variants. Despair is “the sickness unto death.”

Anxiety is a basic concept in all of Kierkegaard’s authorship. It characterizes the very existence of humanity, and is for Kierkegaard therefore much more than an occasional feeling that can come and go. The legendary Danish literary historian Frederik Julius Billeskov Jansen writes: “In the beginning there was anxiety. That is Kierkegaard’s fundamental observation, that anxiety is a primeval element in humanity, the sign of being human” (Billeskov Jansen 1992, 55–56.) In his influential Terminologisk Ordbog from 1936 [1964], Jens Himmelstrup writes:

Kierkegaard thus comprehends anxiety as a point of intersection between two worlds within the human being, the nature determined world and a higher spiritually determined world. In the center of the natural world, man, himself a creature of nature, carries Anxiety’s badge of nobility in his breast

(Himmelstrup 1964, 16.)

The Concept of Anxiety: A Simple Psychologically Orienting Deliberation on the Dogmatic Issue of Hereditary Sin by Vigilius Haufniensis is one of Søren Kierke-
gaard’s least accessible works. Like *Fear and Trembling*, it is one of his pseu-
donymous writings, but many Kierkegaard scholars seem to believe that pseudony-
mity in this case is of minor importance for understanding the text’s meaning.
There is a widespread point of view that this work could just as easily have been
published in Kierkegaard’s own name; that, in fact, it was originally intended to
be so (Kierkegaard 1980, 177). In the book, Kierkegaard links the “psychological”
phenomenon of anxiety with the dogmatic question of original sin, a doctrine that
was adopted in Carthage in the Councils of 412, 416 and 418 plus in Ephesus in
431. The dogma was later appropriated by the Protestants. In a draft for the book
among Kierkegaard’s journals, Kierkegaard defines anxiety in the following way:
“Anxiety is a desire for what one fears” (Kierkegaard, 1967, 39). The most well
known definition is found in *The Concept of Anxiety*: “Anxiety is a sympathetic
antipathy and an antipathetic sympathy” (Kierkegaard 1980, 42).

*The Sickness unto Death. A Christian Psychological Exposition for Upbuilding
and Awakening* by Anti-Climacus deals with an illness in the human spirit. The
author calls this illness despair and there are two fundamental variants:

If a human self had itself established itself, then there could be only one form:
not to will to be oneself, to will to do away with oneself, but there could not be
the form: in despair to will to be oneself. This second formulation is specifi-
cally the expression for the complete dependence of the relation (of the self),
the expression for the inability of the self to arrive at or to be in equilibrium
and rest by itself, but only, in relating itself to itself, by relating itself to that
which has established the entire relation (Kierkegaard 1980b, 14).

So there is no doubt that in the last resort it is about humanity’s relationship to
God. Man is, according to Anti-Climacus, a synthesis of several elements – the
infinite and the finite, the temporal and the eternal, freedom and necessity, and
despair is a disparity in this synthesis, a synthesis that is originally also “from
God’s hand.”

*Fear and Trembling. Dialectical Lyric* by Johannes de Silentio is one of Søren
Kierkegaard’s most literary works. It thematicizes its concerns by means of several
different discourses, including meditative “moods,” stories, a panegyric, clarifica-
tions, and problems treated contemplatively. The book deals with the “Knight of
Faith,” Abraham, who had such a strong faith in God that he was willing to sacrifice
his only son Isaac when God demanded it of him. The sacrifice of his son does not
just appear gruesome; the background also makes it absurd. The Bible relates that
Abraham and Sarah were childless until well into old age. Abraham was 100 years
old when God finally complied with his prayers and gave them a son. The story of Abraham and Isaac does end well since God lets the father keep his son anyhow, after he has shown himself willing to comply with God’s demand. The book elucidates the distinctive character of faith; Johannes de Silentio calls it “The movement of faith” together with the relationship between faith and ethics, and the relationship between the individual’s relations to God and obligations to fellow human beings.

As an introduction, the author writes four different meditative versions of the story of Abraham on his way to Mount Moriah to sacrifice his son. The four versions accentuate different implications of the extreme event. Then the author explains his concerns by means of three problenmata: 1. Is there a teleological suspension of the ethical? 2. Is there an absolute duty to God? 3. Was it ethically defensible for Abraham to conceal his purpose from Sarah? from Eleazar? from Isaac? The title Fear and Trembling refers intertextually to Paul’s letter to the Philippians 2:12, which states that one must work out one’s salvation with fear and trembling.

In the following I shall attempt to read Fear and Trembling from the perspective of what it implies for Kierkegaard to have chosen emotions as his approach to some of his most important concerns as a philosopher. In the secondary literature, fear, trembling and anxiety are mostly analyzed as concepts without particular reference to the fact that it is actually a question of designations of fundamental human emotions. An illustration of this in Danish reception can be found in Joakim Garff’s thesis “Den Søvnløse,” [The Sleepless One] which has taken its title from Fear and Trembling. Here the affective aspect does not play any real role in the analysis of Kierkegaard’s work. The same hold true for Poul Erik Tøjner’s depiction in the 1995 article “Stilens tænker” from Kierkegaard’s æstetik in which he analyzes Fear and Trembling, among others. Despite statements such as “Anxiety is the phenomenon that must be understood when one speaks of Abraham” (Tøjner 1995, 31), neither anxiety, fear or trembling, or for that matter, other affects are particularly involved in the analysis. The same is true of Garff and Jørgen Deh’s interpretation in the same book. On the other hand, Arne Grøn devotes a good deal of attention to both anxiety and despair in his dissertation Subjektivitet og negativitet: Kierkegaard (1997). Grøn’s work is primarily an analysis of The Sickness unto Death. But even though he directs attention to affects, it is the conceptual content in them that he analyzes – not the emotional implications. In this respect his analysis is representative for Kierkegaard research as a whole. Emotional or affective terms are in general dealt with as any other philosophical concepts. From Norwegian reception one can refer to two articles in Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift from respectively 2006 and 2007, wherein first Roe Fremstedal and then Marius Timmann Mjaaland discuss Fear
and Trembling. In both cases it is a question of philosophical and theological discussions of requisite concepts such as ethics, religion, fundamentalism and paternalism. The most interesting reception internationally in recent times is probably Emmanuel Levinas’ Kierkegaard critique in Noms Propres (1976) and Jacques Derrida’s discussion of both in Donner la mort (1995). Levinas advances a very direct and coarse critique of Kierkegaard’s view of the relationship between the religious and the ethical. Derrida attempts to deconstruct the direct opposition between the two, and between ethics and religion, by expanding on the ambiguity in the concept the others/ the other, who can be both God and another person.

Even in its critique of Kierkegaard concerning ethics and generality Lévinas’s thinking stays within the game – the play of difference and analogy – between the face of God and the face of my neighbor, between the infinitely other as God and the infinitely other as another human. (Derrida 2008, 83–84)

Derrida’s point is that the distinction between ethics and religion in Kierkegaard and Levinas’ meaning of the concepts cannot be supported.

But since Lévinas still wants to distinguish between the infinite alterity of God and the “same” infinite alterity of every human, or of the other in general, then he cannot simply say something different from Kierkegaard either. Neither one nor the other can assure himself of a concept of the ethical and of the religious that is of consequence; and consequently they are especially unable to determine the limit between those two orders. Kierkegaard would have to admit, as Lévinas recalls, that ethics is also the order of and respect for absolute singularity, and not only that of the generality or of the repetition of the same. He can therefore no longer distinguish so conveniently between the ethical and the religious. But for his part, in taking into account absolute singularity, that is to say the absolute alterity obtaining in relations with another human, Lévinas is no longer able to distinguish between the infinite alterity of God and that of every human: his ethics is already a religion. (Ibid. 84)

Both Levinas’ and Derrida’s reception of Kierkegaard are quite interesting with respect to the discussion of the meanings of the concepts of ethics and religion, but neither Levinas nor Derrida attach much importance to affective implications in Fear and Trembling.
However in my opinion there is something fundamentally characteristic in Kierkegaard’s thinking with his positioning of affects. He was a dogged opponent of Hegel and the entire notion of a system-philosophy. By giving emotions the position he does, Kierkegaard provides for the very dynamics and movement of his philosophy. Kierkegaard’s paradigmatic thinking is well known; he operates basically with three life stages: an aesthetic, an ethical and a religious. But the fact is that without movement between the stages, his own philosophy would largely have resembled a system-philosophy not so different from the one he criticized. And the movements are emotionally determined. Søren Kierkegaard’s thinking represents a kind of “affective turn” in philosophy. And yet; the emotionality in his writings is quite controlled and Biedermeier-like, especially if compared to the portrayals in Dostoevsky. So the topic for the following analysis is the central position of emotions in Søren Kierkegaard’s thinking, but also the muted character of these same emotions.

“THE SHUDDER OF THE IDEA”

On the way to the sacrificial site where Abraham clearly has the intention of killing his own son with his knife, the strongest expression of affect that Kierkegaard depicts in his hero is the following:

Abraham made everything ready for the sacrifice, calmly and gently, but when he turned away and drew the knife, Isaac saw that Abraham’s left hand was clenched in despair, that a shudder went through his whole body – but Abraham drew the knife. (Kierkegaard 1983, 14)

There is also another portrayal of affects in the mood-setting Exordium. It goes like this:

…but when Isaac saw Abraham’s face again, it had changed: his gaze was wild, his whole being was sheer terror. He seized Isaac by the chest, threw him to the ground, and said, “Stupid boy, do you think I am your father? I am an idolater. Do you think it is God’s command? No, it is my desire.” (Ibid. 10)

This depiction is considerably more dramatic. But it is fake. Abraham is pretending, and displays a wild frenzy towards Isaac in the purpose of preserving his son’s faith in God, because “it is better that he believes me a monster than that he should lose faith in you” (11). Isaac’s reaction is as Abraham wished it to be, and this is probably the strongest expression of dread in Fear and Trembling:
Then Isaac trembled and cried out in his anguish: “God in heaven, have mercy on me, God of Abraham, have mercy on me; if I have no father on earth, then you be my father!” (10)

At the same time, of course, Abraham’s dissimulation intimates that God himself is a “monster,” and even if he attains what he had hoped with his son, Abraham’s deception implies that Isaac has no father, either in heaven or on earth. Isaac preserves the faith in a God who actually is a “monster” who has demanded his death, and he loses faith in his father who claims he desires to kill him.

Dissimulation is not the only characteristic of Abraham’s emotional reactions in the Exordium section. Concealment and silence play an important role. When a hand clenched in despair is the strongest expression of Abraham’s situation, it is obvious that we are confronted with a figure who does everything he can to control himself and control his feelings. Self control and concealment also characterize Isaac’s reaction in the fourth Exordium version:

Then they returned home again, and Sarah hurried to meet them, but Isaac had lost the faith. Not a word is ever said of this in the world, and Isaac never talked to anyone about what he had seen, and Abraham did not suspect that anyone had seen it. (14)

It is Abraham himself who suffered a serious life loss in Exordium version number two:

From that day henceforth, Abraham was old; he could not forget that God had ordered him to do this. Isaac flourished as before, but Abraham’s eyes were darkened, and he saw joy no more. (12)

The four introductory versions of the story of Abraham function as empathetic meditations with the aim of having “witnessed that event,” when “Abraham rode with sorrow before him and Isaac beside him” (9). The Exordium is introduced by means of the story of a man who more or less became obsessed by Abraham’s situation, and almost basks in the “shudder of the idea” that the event arouses in him. “The shudder of the idea” is an appropriate expression on the part of the author, because in Fear and Trembling it is a matter of a distinctive Kierkegaardian combination of reflection and feeling – with a clear emphasis on feeling in preference to reason: “…his enthusiasm for it became greater and greater, and yet he could understand the story less and less” (ibid.)
PHILOSOPHICAL SCRIPTS

The point of departure for Johannes de Silentio in the section “Preliminary Expectoration” is an old saying from Paul’s second letter to the Thessalonians 3:10 that only he who works, receives bread. That is not how it happens in the real, external world, Silentio concludes. But in the world of the spirit, in contrast, he thinks this is valid. Then he formulates a central doctrine in which a series of dissimilar elements are positioned in relationship to each other:

It is different in the world of the spirit. Here an eternal divine order prevails. Here it does not rain on both the just and the unjust; here the sun does not shine on both good and evil. Here it holds true that only the one who works gets bread, that only the one who was in anxiety finds rest, that only the one who descends into the lower world rescues the beloved, that only the one who draws the knife gets Isaac (27).

The statement about anxiety, “only the one who was in anxiety finds rest,” is important for further treatment in this analysis. The idea of the emotions’ tendency or inclination to form combinations is completely decisive for the conception of Søren Kierkegaard as philosophy’s “affective turn.” It is a phenomenon that is described by many psychologists. Keith Oatley asserts that emotions must be seen in connection with motivations, and notes that “motivations combine easily” (Oatley 2004, 94). He claims also that “emotions that derive from the different kinds of motivation succeed each other, and when they do, they follow narrative sequences” (ibid.). A similar idea forms the basis for scripts theories, such as were introduced by Roger Schank and Robert Abelson, and pursued by Sylvan Tomkins. Both the theories about general scripts and individual life scripts are based on the assumption that emotions have a tendency to be entered into in fixed combinations and form sequences. Conceptions of scripts often refer to relatively trivial combinations, such as fear/flight for example, or to special individual and deviating connections. In Søren Kierkegaard there are conceptions about fixed, philosophical or existential combinations or scripts that emotions enter into. The assertion “only the one who was in anxiety finds rest” refers to both a temporal and a causal inclusion of an important emotion in a fixed combination or a essential script. Anxiety is not just an isolated feeling; it leads to something: namely, rest. It is actually the case that only the one who has experienced anxiety can find the Kierkegaardian rest. The script is not random and not individual, but is a part of a philosophical way of thinking about existence. Anxiety is an emotion, but it is also an element in a sequence that leads to existential rest.
With this background in the conception of a type of philosophical *script*, it makes sense that Silentio makes use of the designation “movement” in connection with core phenomena in the book. “The movement of faith” is the most important, but it is seen in connection with “the movement of infinity” or “the movement of infinite resignation.” Faith and the character of Abraham seen as “the Father of Faith” or “the Knight of Faith” is the book’s main concern. But faith is not comprehended as a thing or a condition; faith is a “movement,” and preceding the movement of faith comes the infinite resignation or the movement of resignation.

Infinite resignation is the last stage before faith, so that anyone who has not made this movement does not have faith, for only in infinite resignation do I become conscious of my eternal validity, and only then can one speak of grasping existence by virtue of faith. (Kierkegaard 1983, 46).

Here too then, is found a fixed combination and a sequential order, a *script*. It is relevant in this context to observe what Silentio writes about the role of emotions. For the author, a central postulate is that “movement” is set in play by the power of emotions – not by means of thought, reflection or logic:

This [to initiate movement] requires passion. Every movement of infinity is carried out through passion, and no reflection can produce a movement. This is the continual leap in existence that explains the movement, whereas mediation is a chimera, which in Hegel is supposed to explain everything and which is also the only thing he never has tried to explain (ibid. 42).

Here likely lies one of the explanations of the prioritization of the power of emotions in Søren Kierkegaard’s oeuvre, that is, the ubiquitous polemics against Hegel and Hegelian dialectics. Or perhaps it can be the other way around: Maybe the controversy is due to the underestimation of the power of emotional passion in the Hegelian system, as understood by Kierkegaard? In any case, in work after work it is a fundamental point for Kierkegaard to hammer in that the Hegelian logic with its “mediation” cannot lead anyone to where the Kierkegaardian “movements” can. The power of thought does not work, reflections provide no movement, dialectic phases do not lead forward. But *that* is what passion does; emotions – fear and trembling and anxiety and despair. The polemics against Hegel also has its background in the fundamental disagreement about the movement or *scripts*’ endpoint. Indefatigably Kierkegaard makes fun of what he comprehends as Hegel’s disavowal of faith. Already in the Preface to *Fear and Trembling*, he has Silentio write:
In our age, everyone is unwilling to stop with faith but goes further. It perhaps would be rash to ask where they are going, whereas it is a sign of urbanity and culture for me to assume that everyone has faith, since otherwise it certainly would be odd to speak of going further. It was different in those ancient days. Faith was then a task for a whole lifetime, because it was assumed that proficiency in believing is not acquired either in days or in weeks. (ibid., 7)

For Hegel, faith represents the “immediate” that is, the point of departure in a path towards an intellectually well-founded position: Faith is to be nullified, mediated. For Kierkegaard faith is the highest or the very terminus of “the movement.” There is no thought or reflection that can exceed or “nullify” faith. The Knight of Faith is the foremost hero in life. There is no movement that leads beyond faith. The sequences of script stop there, and one cannot arrive there by means of “mediation.” One can only arrive there by means of what Kierkegaard calls “the Leap.”

The Leap is a well-known element in Kierkegaard’s conceptual world. It is in direct contrast to the idea of mediation, transition or dialectics, as Kierkegaard understood it in Hegel. In Kierkegaard’s world of thought there is no continuous or gradually gliding transition into the realm of faith. Neither can one attain it by reasoning. The movement of faith can only be undertaken as a “Leap,” and then only “by virtue of the absurd.” In our context, the point is, as cited in the italicized quotation above, that “the Leap” has its basis in passion, that is, in emotionality. Jens Himmelstrup stresses this point in the following manner: “The Leap (…) has a passion, a passionate movement, Pathos, as a prerequisite” (Himmelstrup 1964, 191).

THE TRAGIC HERO AND THE KNIGHT OF FAITH

The two “movements” in Kierkegaard’s script, “the double movement,” form two sequences that follow each other in fixed order: “the movement of infinity” first, and then “the movement of faith.” The two movements are also linked to passion, as we have seen. In addition, the two sequences are tied to two different sets of emotions, so that an emotional script is also created. This is already implied in the section “Preliminary Expectoration” where “the infinite movement” or “the infinite resignation” is several times combined with pain, grief and tears, while it is said of “the Knight of Faith” that “What is omitted from Abraham’s story is the anxiety” (Kierkegaard 1983, 28), or pushed to extremes:

The ethical expression for what Abraham did is that he meant to murder Isaac; the religious expression is that he meant to sacrifice Isaac – but precisely in this
contradiction is the anxiety that can make a person sleepless, and yet without this anxiety Abraham is not who he is. (ibid. 30)

In the section “Problema I,” where precisely such a transgression of the ethical is discussed, Kierkegaard develops both the connection and the difference between the two “movements,” including the emotional contexts. The main problem in the section is to what extent there exists a “teleological suspension of the Ethical.” If not “the single individual as the individual is higher than the universal” then Abraham is a murderer, and the entire incentive to murder Isaac is a temptation. For the murder to be considered as a sacrifice, faith must take care of “this paradox that the single individual is higher than the universal” (54, 55).

With the background of this approach to the problem, Kierkegaard turns to mythological and literary examples, and discusses the Greek Iphigenia, the Biblical Jephthah, and the Roman Brutus before Abraham. All of these stories deal with the murder or sacrifice of one’s own children. Kierkegaard establishes a fundamental distinction between the tragic hero and the Knight of Faith. The tragic hero remains within the ethical, and his emotional gamut is pain. Agamemnon could wish he were a “lowly man who dares to weep” (57). In the terrible moment, the tragic hero must “heroically have overcome the agony” (58). The object of his sacrifice cries and grieves over her fate, and the story arouses tears of compassion for their pain by those of us who hear it:

The tragic hero finishes his task at a specific moment in time, but as time passes he does what is no less significant: he visits the person encompassed by sorrow, who cannot breathe because of his anguished sighs, whose thoughts oppress him, heavy with tears. He appears to him, breaks the witchcraft of sorrow, loosens the bonds, evokes the tears, and the suffering one forgets his own sufferings in those of the tragic hero. (61)

But for the Knight of Faith the situation is different. One cannot weep for Abraham, claims Kierkegaard: “where is the soul so gone astray that it has the audacity to weep for Abraham? (61). His emotional gamut is different: “One cannot weep over Abraham. One approaches him with a *horror religiosus*, as Israel approached Mount Sinai.” Abraham’s story causes us to tremble with “anxiety…deference and horror” (ibid.). Not grief, nor pain – but anxiety: “the anxiety, the distress, the paradox” (63). In “Problema II,” which deals with the question “Is there an Absolute Duty to God?” the dimensions of anxiety, distress and the paradox are developed. The emotional range does not exist just in the relationship to the heinous-
ness of the act of murder, but is also connected to the loneliness of standing in an absolute relationship to God. To overrule the universal is more or less in principle uncommunicable when confronted with the universal:

But the distress and the anxiety in the paradox is that he, humanly speaking, is thoroughly incapable of making himself understandable. Only in the moment when his act is in absolute contradiction to his feelings, only then does he sacrifice Isaac, but the reality of his act is that by which he belongs to the universal, and there he is and remains a murderer. (74)

So the Knight of Faith is always in “absolute isolation.” Only a sectarian faith creates fellowship: “the spurious knight is sectarian.” The Knight of Faith is “… simply and solely the single individual without any connections” (79). De Silentio reinforces the contrast between the single individual and the universal by drawing in yet another intense emotion, that is, hate. He refers to the passage in the Bible from Luke 14:26, which states that anyone who wants to come to Christ must hate his father and mother, his wife, sister, brother and his own children. The author snorts at exegetical practices that weaken the drama in this statement, and “ends by slavering instead of terrifying” (73). Seen ethically, de Silentio says, the correct expression for what Abraham does is that “he hates Isaac” (74). From the perspective of faith, the action is otherwise, that is, a sacrifice, but it cannot be communicated in an understandable way. It is a paradox and it remains so in silence, as it enters into “the distress and anxiety in the paradox of faith” (75).

The approach to the problem of the uncommunicable is developed further in “Problema III,” in several quite elaborate digressions which the author attempts to legitimize towards the end of the section when he again returns to Abraham. The primary point with respect to the “Incommensurable” in the relationship between the ethical and the individual is however already elucidated in the two preceding sections.

THE TAX COLLECTOR AND THE YOUNG LAD

And yet, de Silentio leaves open ever so slightly the possibility that the Knight of Faith is still found among us. In the chapter “Preliminary Expectoration” Johannes de Silentio undertakes an attempt at bringing his concept up to date. This is one of the most astonishing elements in de Silentio’s account. He tries to conceive of a contemporary Knight of Faith (Contemporaneous to 1843). How would a person appear who had overruled the ethical, who transgresses the universal? We must
envision a person who believes that the individual is superior to joint community, who “suspends” ethics and believes himself to stand in an absolute relationship with God.

Transplanted to our own time, the 2010s, it is not difficult to envision a fundamentalist of one or another type, a person who believes that God demands something groundbreaking, something unprecedented, of him. He wants to sacrifice something for God. Not a son, perhaps, but something that the whole world besides will regard as murderous and hateful, but in his eyes – as “the individual” – emerges as a sublime act in its expression of a faith devoted to God. It would not be difficult to fill in such a category with examples from everyday life in our own time. There is no doubt that one inevitably envisions a very dangerous person. There are many today who believe that they have an absolute relationship with their God, and who set themselves above the universal, the ethical and everything that belongs to community. It is difficult to feel any kind of admiration for this type of person, as de Silentio obviously does. On the other hand, it is easy to feel both anxiety, fear and trembling.

One of the crassest Kierkegaard critics precisely on this point is Emmanuel Levinas. He saw the approach to the problem according to the suspension of the ethical in his time:

> It is Kierkegaard’s violence that shocks me. The manner of the strong and the violent, who fear neither scandal nor destruction, has become, since Kierkegaard and before Nietzsche, a manner of philosophy. One philosophizes with a hammer. In that permanent scandal, in that opposition to everything, I perceive by anticipation the echoes of certain cases of verbal violence that claimed to be schools of thought, and pure ones at that. I am thinking not only of National Socialism, but of all the sorts of thought it exalted. That harshness of Kierkegaard emerges at the exact moment when he “transcends ethics”. (Levinas 1996, 76)

There were also people in the nineteenth century who, in conformity with Kierkegaard, were occupied with what was “beyond good and evil.” When Nietzsche’s Zarathustra comes down from the mountain and proclaims the “Üermensch,” the one who has transcended “slave morality,” there is no doubt that this is a matter of a potentially dangerous person. One can also see an association with Ibsen’s Brand.19 He too has the notion that God has called him for a special mission. He

sacrifices both his son and his wife in order to follow his conviction. No ram or alternative sacrificial lamb turns up at the last moment. Both his child and wife die because Brand thinks he has an absolute relationship with God, and can transcend the universal.

Johannes de Silentio’s conception of the one who has transcended the universal is different. His attempt at updating is surprising for two reasons. In the first place, in his “Eulogy on Abraham,” and elsewhere, de Silentio takes care to elevate Abraham to such a high degree that no one ever could be imagined to resemble him. It can be said that in this way the phenomenon that he represents, faith, disappears out of the realm of reality. Faith becomes such a rarely conceivable phenomenon that it cannot in any case represent the phenomenon that one considers the fundamental element in the collective religious community. Faith emerges as something other than religion.

In the second place, de Silentio carries out some remarkable literary reversals when he is bringing his hero up to date. It begins, to be sure, with him imagining a man who suffers from “sleeplessness,” who decides that he is going to do the same as Abraham. He wants to sacrifice the best thing he has for God; he will offer his son. The sleepless one gets the idea during the sermon on Sunday when the minister preaches about Abraham. “He goes home, he wants to do just as Abraham did, for the son, after all, is the best” (28). But then de Silentio immediately makes a peculiar choice. In the little story he has started about the sleepless man and the minister, he follows the minister and not the sleepless man in the continuation of the story. The sleepless man’s point of view is not represented in any manner that is reminiscent of the Abraham variations in the first chapter “Exordium.” We only learn that if he goes ahead and carries through with his intention, he will presumably be executed or sent to the insane asylum.

This is followed by several surprising shifts in the text. After having established that “the ethical expression for what Abraham did is that he meant to murder Isaac,” (30) the entire ethical aspect disappears from the depiction of the project of revival. That someone who has transcended the ethical can be a dangerous man is no longer a part of de Silentio’s approach to the problem. The actualized Knight of Faith is a completely harmless, even invisible character. All fear and trembling disappear in a Biedermeier bourgeoisie and a dinner of roast lamb with vegetables (39). De Silentio at first establishes that he has never at any time seen an authentic example of a Knight of Faith. After that he has recourse to imagining a contemporary Knight of Faith: “As I said before, I have not found anyone like that; meanwhile, I may very well imagine him. Here he is” (38).
But de Silentio’s imaginative ability is conspicuously proper. The Knight of Faith, if he exists in 1843, is just like everyone else in the bourgeois society. He is invisible. He does nothing deviant. Quite the opposite; he is one of the crowd. He does not struggle with a desire to sacrifice anyone, and he does not appear to be concerned with ethical approaches to problems. He has apparently adapted himself completely to life in autocratic Denmark. One really has to ask: Where in the world has de Silentio gotten the idea that someone who has transcended the ethical is completely the same as everyone else, totally invisible?

De Silentio’s portrayal falls into two parts, literarily. The first depicts the Knight of Faith in everyday life, as he becomes the subject of a series of metaphorical comparisons. He resembles a tax collector, a philistine, a pen pusher, a mercenary, a postman, a restaurateur, a capitalist, a butcher, a reckless good-for-nothing, and finally a dancer (39–41). Only in the last characterization can he be recognized: He wavers for a moment when his foot touches the floor and “this wavering shows that [he] is an alien in the world” (41).

The second part of the portrayal consists of an exemplar, that is to say an elucidation in the form of “a specific case” (41). What is sensational about the exemplar is that it does not at all concern a person who is put to the test by God, nor about someone who transcends the ethical, nor about one who has an absolute relationship with God. The story of Abraham is replaced by a love story inspired by a folk song about a young lad who falls in love with a princess, but who cannot have her. What follows is a Søren Kierkegaard/Regine Olsen-like story about a man who has resigned his lover infinitely, but retains her “spiritually” by renouncing her:

The knight does not cancel his resignation, he keeps his love just as young as it was in the first moment; he never loses it simply because he has made the movement infinitely. (44)

De Silentio gives a detailed description of how one can carry out infinite resignation confronted with an unrealizable love relationship. The first movement, the movement of resignation, is something he can very well understand. But on the other hand, he cannot understand the second movement at all, the movement of faith, faith that one will after all “get her – that is, by virtue of the absurd, …” (46).

To a certain extent, the exemplar corroborates the rest of the work: The two movements follow each other as in a script. The one presupposes the other. One can be understood with reason, the other cannot. It is paradoxical and absurd.

But emotionally de Silentio’s updating project is remarkable because of his reversals. The emotions involved partly confirm the rest of the work. The two
movements do not only appear in a determined order; they are, as we already have
heard, causally related to each other. Infinite resignation is the category of melan-
choly, grief and pain. But the movement of faith restores joy, joy in life, with “fini-
tude.” Only he who has executed the one movement can sacrifice Isaac, but then
all future joy is lost forever: “Now all is lost, God demands Isaac, I sacrifice him
and along with him all my joy...” (35):

What was the easiest for Abraham would have been difficult for me – once
again to be happy in Isaac! – for he who with all the infinity of his soul, proprio
motu et propriis auspiciis [of his own accord and on his own responsibility],
has made the infinite movement and cannot do more, he keeps Isaac only with
pain. (ibid.)

Abraham, on the other hand, carries out the second movement, and joy is restored
to him: “… his really fervent joy on receiving Isaac…” (36–37). The Knight of
Faith recaptures “finitude” by virtue of the absurd, and thereby also joy:

He finds pleasure in everything, takes part in everything, and every time one
sees him participating in something particular, he does it with an assiduousness
that marks the worldly man who is attached to such things. (39)

The two movements and the two emotional registers are interrelated, and create –
as already demonstrated – a sequence:

He drains the deep sadness of life in infinite resignation, he knows the bless-
edness of infinity, he has felt the pain of renouncing everything, the most pre-
cious thing in the world, and yet the finite tastes just as good to him as to one
who never knew anything higher, because his remaining in finitude would
have no trace of a timorous, anxious routine, and yet he has this security that
makes him delight in it as if finitude were the surest thing of all. (40)

So far, so good, one could say. But the entire updating project in “Preliminary
Expectoration” begins, as we know, in a different emotional register: “only the one
who was in anxiety finds rest.” De Silentio vigorously polemicizes against making
the story of Abraham commonplace. The story has the property of always being
“magnificent,” no matter how poorly it is understood. But when de Silentio
pounces on the minister and his Sunday sermon instead of following the point of
view of the sleepless man, it is precisely because he thinks the minister spoke in
uninspired and generalizing terms about Abraham. De Silentio has no doubt about what the error consisted of: “What is omitted from Abraham’s story is the anxiety” (28). But what is noteworthy in this context is that this is precisely the same thing de Silentio does in his project of updating. Whether it be the tax collector, the philistine, the pen pusher or the mercenary – they are all depicted without anxiety. The same is true of the young suitor who falls in love with his princess. Of course it is sad that he cannot have her, but he does not experience anxiety. None of the examples equate with the title of the work: Here the two movements are actualized, but without fear and without trembling.

This transition gives an excellent opportunity to discuss the meaning of the emotions in *Fear and Trembling*, but the example also invites a more general discussion about the relationship between story and emotion, that is to say, the fundamental elements in an affective narratology. For this discussion, I will once again have recourse to some points of view from Patrick Colm Hogan’s book *Affective Narratology*. In several instances in the book, Hogan treats a story’s different elements, classified by extent and distinctive quality, from *work* to *story*, *episode*, *event* and *incident*. All of these components are found both in literary works and in what Monika Fludernik calls a “natural narratology” – except for *work*. *Work* is a literary phenomenon, and may not have a “precise ‘natural’ counterpart,” Hogan claims (Hogan 2011, 70). The story of Abraham can hardly be called a *work* by any reasonable standard meaning of the concept. But we certainly can call it a *story*. What de Silentio has done with the story is to classify it analytically into two *event* sequences which he designates as two movements, the movement of resignation and the movement of faith. He then discusses and elaborates on these existentially and philosophically. The project of updating is a part of the expanded examination. De Silentio disregards the historical distance, among other things, because he is more interested in the existential distance that Abraham’s faith represents.

Here I believe it is relevant to draw in what Hogan writes about the relationship between such sequences and the story itself: “It may seem at first that a story is just a sequence of episodes. But clearly this is not the case…” (ibid.). According to Hogan, two additional factors are necessary in order for sequences of events and episodes to become a story. The first is causality, the second is emotional experience:

So, this suggests that proximity in story space is a function of several factors. One is causal relatability. Causal relatability includes such factors as spatial and temporal contiguity. Spatially and temporally distant events may cause one another. However, temporal or spatial proximity makes us more inclined
to interpret events as causally related. A second factor is emotional relatability. Two events or episodes are closer, more readily combined into a story structure, if they contribute to a single emotional experience. (72)

I have mentioned several times how de Silentio stresses consecutive order and causality between the two movements. Only the one who has already carried out the movement of resignation can realize the movement of faith. De Silentio’s analytical sequencing of the story accordingly maintains an important factor in the relationship between events, episodes and story. But, as Hogan indicates:

In short, we have something like “preference rules” here. Two events or episodes are distant in story space if they are both causally and emotionally unrelated. They are closer in story space if they are causally or emotionally relatable. They are closest in story space if they are both causally and emotionally related.

I should note that emotional relatability does not necessarily mean contributing to the same emotion. It means contributing to the same emotional experience, usually as construed from some concluding point. (ibid.)

To me it appears that the expanded treatment of the sequences in the story, especially the section on updating, breaks the principle that components should be “emotionally related” or contribute to “a single emotional experience” in order to be part of a story. In other words: de Silentio has sequenced the story in such a way that the basic connection is lost. The most important, even the most decisive emotional experience in the story – “and yet without this anxiety Abraham is not who he is” – Anxiety, has disappeared from the sequences (30). De Silentio has fallen for the minister’s trap; he has made Abraham’s story commonplace. The narratives of the young lover, the tax collector and the philistine can perhaps still be moving, but they do not arouse Fear and Trembling. They do not contribute to “the same emotional experience” (Hogan 2011, 72). There is reason to be reminded of Hogan’s distinction here: It is not necessarily about “the same emotion,” but rather “the same emotional experience.” In de Silentio’s portrayal this means that the emotional discrepancy manifests itself whether we focus on the represented figures in the text or on the experience of the readers. Neither the young lad or the reader recoils in anxiety or fear and trembling.

In my opinion the emotional element does not just function here as a critical annotation to de Silentio’s project of updating. In line with Hogan’s viewpoints I believe we are probably confronted with a phenomenon that can be generalized, that is to say, it should be included in a theory of affective narratology. The affective or emotional aspect of a narrative belongs to its fundamental, integral character. Being emotionally charged is not a colorful effect that is superimposed on a more fundamental narratological hallmark. The affective aspect is basic in the sense that it should be included as a standard element in a valid narratological analysis. When de Silentio subtracts anxiety, he is telling a different story.

PASSION AS THE NEW UNIVERSAL

When we have come as far as the “Epilogue,” it is interesting to call attention to the establishment of a new category for the universal – perhaps not considered as such from the author’s side, but completely in line with my analysis with respect to the emphasis on the emotional. It is apparent that in the course of his representation, de Silentio has happened to give “passion” a position as an alternative category for the universal. Passion is namely nothing less than the “essentially human” (Kierkegaard 1983, 121). This depiction is foreshadowed throughout the entire book, generally by the stress the author places on emotions and passions, and especially with utterances about passion as humanity’s essential commonality, as for example here at the conclusion of “Problema I”: “for that which unites all human life is passion,” and, of course, the author naturally adds: “faith is a passion” (67). In other places the point of view is inserted in passing, in the form of subordinate clauses: “I shall not review here the human distinction, either to love or to hate, not because I have so much against it, for at least it is passionate, …” (73). In the context it concerns a point that is not relevant, but the author believes that it is appropriate to present his general concern that if it is passionate, he has nothing against it, just because it is passionate. In the “Epilogue” all is drawn in and “passion” becomes the “essentially human.” De Silentio’s conclusion namely deals with the fact that when it comes down to the fundamental condition in existence, each generation must start anew, from the beginning:

Whatever one generation learns from another, no generation learns the essentially human from a previous one. In this respect, each generation begins prim- itively, has no task other than what each previous generation had, nor does it advance further, insofar as the previous generations did not betray the task and
deceive themselves. The essentially human is passion, in which one generation perfectly understands another and understands itself. (121)

Despite a constant bombardment from de Silentio’s side against the universal understood as the ethical, the universal has survived the portrayal and been resurrected as the “Passionate.” This should confirm the affects and emotions’ position in Søren Kierkegaard’s mode of thought. After the depiction in Fear and Trembling, it is naturally not surprising that de Silentio believes “Faith is the highest passion in a person” (122). At the same time, he has made faith into something so rare, unattainable and beyond any description and any fellowship that it is difficult to imagine any other example at all than the one about Abraham. De Silentio’s concern has likely been to elevate faith, make it the last station in the existential script, but in reality he can have had the misfortune of eradicating it among common people. Perhaps it can then be a consolation to belong among the passionate who have a part in the “essentially human.”
Among the most agonizing scenes in Norwegian literature is Brand’s chastising of his wife Agnes in Ibsen’s drama *Brand* (1866). First he demands that she sacrifice her son, Alf, so that he himself can remain in his calling as a minister in an enclosed and unhealthy Norwegian rural district. Then he denigrates her grief over the dead child with merciless importunity. “Why do you tear my open wound so horribly in my frightful agony of grief?” (Ibsen 1972, 160) She begs for time and patience to grieve, but Brand believes that grief is sin and memories are idols. The contrast between them shows up in crass dialogues and unforgettable scenes, as in the episode where Brand forces Agnes to give away the last remnants of children’s clothing she has saved as a remembrance of Alf. While Brand is obsessed by a religious idea of sacrifice, Agnes is the grip of grief:

BRAND. [shakes his head] No. There is yet more to give.
AGNES. [smiles] Ask! I cannot give what I do not have!
BRAND. Give All!
AGNES. Why don’t you take it? Ah, Brand, you will find nothing there!
BRAND. You have your grieving, and your memories . . .
You have your flood of sinful yearning . . .
AGNES. [in despair] Then tear my tormented heart out by the roots!
Tear it out! (Ibsen 1972, 181–82).

It is difficult to imagine a more piercing portrayal of the intensity of grief than the one Ibsen gives in *Brand*. If one is going to study emotion and narration, this is one of the most important scenes of dereliction in Norwegian literature. The depiction is dramatized by the rebuke, correction and punishment of the mourner by her closest potential comforter who simply refuses to relate to grief as a normal emotional reaction. Instead, he acts in accordance with a religious script in which he himself has a superior position. This means that the study of emotion and narration in Brand cannot be accomplished unless power and hegemony are included in the analysis. Even deep, personal grief is intimately influenced by social conditions and the

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21. All text citations from *Brand* are from the Oxford Ibsen edition of 1972, translated by James Kirkup in collaboration with James Walter McFarlane.
mourner’s position in the community to which he belongs. In the following I will first scrutinize Ibsen’s depiction of grief as an intense emotion with its own pattern of progression, as it is portrayed in Act IV. Then I will endeavor to confront the extensive and complex question pertaining to connections between individual emotional reactions and relationships of power in the social environment.

INTRODUCTION

It is pertinent to begin by giving a short survey of the entire drama. Brand is a five-act drama in verse, published in 1866. It was originally intended as a play to be read, but was performed for the first time in Stockholm in 1885. The main character, Brand, is a young clergyman with a strong sense of mission, a calling. He believes that Christianity has been weakened of its seriousness, and has allowed itself to fit into “the spirit of compromise,” which is his diagnosis of his age. He sees his life’s purpose as fighting against the lax humanism of his time and restoring the strength of Christianity. We encounter him on his way over the mountain to his little home district, where he settles down and forms a little family with his wife Agnes and their son Alf. His mother, who is wealthy, is on her deathbed. With his inflexible demands of life he quickly comes into conflict with the district society’s authorities, the mayor, the doctor and the dean, in addition to his family. His sense of calling is more important than everything else, and when his son becomes life-threateningly ill from the inhospitable climate there, Brand refuses to move. Alf dies, as does his wife, which we will touch upon more closely. Still, Brand has the support of the inhabitants for a period of time. Towards the end of the play, however, they turn against him, and chase him from the settlement, up into the mountains where we met him at the beginning of the drama. He is engulfed in an avalanche and dies.

In one respect, the play tells two stories simultaneously. The one concerns the incorruptible, pure person who encounters the world unflinchingly and does not yield to adversity. He displays a rigid consistency in his choices in life, and manages his calling without a margin for bargaining. He exhibits the strength to demand all or nothing both from himself and from his surroundings. But his battle fails, and ends in tragedy. It is this version of the story that has made Brand a heroic figure in large segments of Norwegian literary reception. The other story is the undermining of this heroic figure partly on an ethical basis, and partly by means of elements in the play’s subtext in which his overall consistent personality is revealed, and the idealistic icon cracks.22

22. I have earlier published a relatively extensive analysis of Brand, in which these two stories in the play are pursued step by step through the text by means of a detailed analysis of composition. See “Stormen fra fjellet. Om Henrik Ibsens Brand” in Andersen 1997, 72–139.
The first two acts establish Brand as a heroic figure, the most important personages are introduced, and the main character’s project takes shape. Conflicts and problems are insinuated, so that the foundation for development in the play comes into focus. In the first act, when Brand is on his way over the mountain, we are presented with his main project, his battle against what he calls the “triple threat” or the three demons: rashness of mind, dullness of mind, madness of mind. Brand feels himself called to fight against these cardinal sins. He believes that he can save his generation from the “sickness of the world” by winning this struggle. The mission is developed and rendered concrete in the second act. Brand has arrived in the district and is confronted with two challenges – a lack of both food and soulfulness. The two challenges exemplify what we can call the “little” sacrifice and the “large” sacrifice, a contrast that corresponds to the material versus the spiritual. Brand denies that his call has anything to do with material goods, and refuses to help people in need. But he displays heroic courage in a mortally dangerous storm to help a person in spiritual need. The only one who dares to go with him is Agnes. After this deed Brand becomes a hero in the village, he is hired as the area’s clergyman, and Agnes becomes his wife.

A new phase of the drama arises in the third act. In both the third and fourth acts the hero is put to serious trials. The reversal in the play is demonstrated in both time and space. Three years have passed, and the action now takes place at the parsonage, where the conflict intensifies, and takes place most fiercely in his own family. Two clear-cut questions are put in the third act: Should Brand go as a clergyman to help his mother in her spiritual need as death approaches? And: Should Brand and his family move away in order to save their son’s health? In both cases, Brand chooses to behave passively, that is to remain where he is, because it is his understanding that his calling demands this of him. His mother dies without the consolation of a pastor, and Alf wastes away and dies. Brand’s trials continue in the fourth act. He again faces a choice, and this time he sacrifices his wife. The demands he makes of his wife appear as reinforced reiterations of the demands he made of his mother. Brand refused to visit his mother on her deathbed because she would not surrender all her worldly goods. After sacrificing her son, Agnes believes that she has nothing else to give. But Brand refers to her grief, her memories and her sinful longings. He demands sacrifices. She sacrifices. In contrast to Brand’s mother, who retained a portion of her own, Agnes yields to all demands. She gives everything and loses her will to live.

Parallel to the drama in the family, a struggle also continually takes place with the authorities in the society, a battle over the support of the inhabitants, and a clash about public utility investments. In the course of the fourth act, this struggle
comes to a head over the building of a new church in the district. This struggle over the church creates the basis for the conclusion of the fifth act. The church debate refers all the way back to the opening of the play, where Brand met the peculiar character Gerd on his way over the mountain. She declared that she had rejected the little village church in favor of “a church that is builded of ice and snow!” (97). The play ends as the inhabitants of the village turn against Brand and chase him up into the mountains. There he is seized by an avalanche and thus finds his final resting place in “a church builded of ice and snow.” So the fifth act moves the hero’s struggle out of the family confines and into the perspective of the community. But Brand also fails as a builder of society.

The following analysis will specifically concentrate on the family struggle in the fourth act.

GRIEF

In 2005 the American journalist and author Joan Didion published a memoir called The Year of Magical Thinking, as a reaction after the sudden death of her husband, the author John Gregory Dunne. Their daughter Quintana was at the same time seriously ill, and also died at a later time. In the description of grief a while after her husband’s death, Didion writes, among other things, the following:

I was not yet prepared to address the suits and shirts and jackets but I thought I could handle what remained of the shoes, a start.
I stopped at the door to the room.
I could not give away the rest of his shoes.
I stood there for a moment, then realized why: he would need shoes if he was to return.
The recognition of this thought by no means eradicated the thought.
I have still not tried to determine (say, by giving away the shoes) if the thought has lost its power.

(Didion 2005, 37).

Didion also mentions the memoir Caitlin Thomas wrote after her husband, the author Dylan Thomas, died. It was called Leftover Life to Kill (1957). In the scene where Agnes is forced to give away the last remnants of Alf’s clothing to a vagabond woman, this is precisely what happens: Brand forces her to kill the “leftover life” of her child long before she is ready to reconcile herself to his death. She interprets it as “sacrilege. A crime against my dead child” (189).
Grief is regarded by many as one of the most intense emotions that people can experience. The psychologist and psychiatrist John Bowlby for instance, writes in his massive work *Loss, Sadness and Depression*: “Loss of a loved person is one of the most intensely painful experiences any human being can suffer” (Bowlby 1980, 7). Many psychologists and psychiatrists have tried to describe the distinctive character of grief, its effects, its different parts and its progression. In addition to research literature, there also exists a series of guidebooks that offer advice for mourners on how deep sorrow can be overcome, and how one can return to a new and mastered condition of normalcy. These were likely not available in Ibsen’s day. Bowlby claims that the actual interest in research on grief sprang up in the 1940s, but it appears that Ibsen in his depiction of Agnes had a thorough understanding of the mourner’s situation. Moreover, it is evident from his portrayal of Brand that he must have had insight into the needs of the mourner; since he allows Brand to consistently act contrary to them. In their book *The Meaning of Grief. A Dramaturgical Approach to Understanding Emotion* (1987), Larry Cochran and Emily Claspell include a chapter on “Themes of Grieving,” in which, after interviewing a series of informants, they present a list of elements that the mourners have emphasized in their accounts, including “appreciation of support from others” (Cochran and Claspell 1987, 76). The researchers write: “What they seemed to appreciate most was someone who would listen or someone who would share his or her own experience” (ibid.) At the outset nothing would have been more natural in Brand and Agnes’ situation than to share their grief. After all, both have lost their son, and Agnes clearly believes that Brand too is suffering without wanting to admit it. Still even on this point, Ibsen has research on his side: According to Bowlby, disagreements between spouses in times of grief are quite widespread, and often lead to divorce. This is evident even in his materials from before the dramatic increase in divorce in the western world (Bowlby 1980, 118). Brand chastises Agnes incessantly and persistently because she is grieving, and punishes her by withdrawing and leaving her in isolation when she does not behave as he commands.

Ibsen likely had little professional material to draw upon when he portrayed Agnes and Brand’s reactions of grief after the death of Alf. Among the early endeavors to describe grief psychologically is Sigmund Freud’s well-known article “Mourning and Melancholia” from 1917. Freud’s main concern was melancholy, but as a basis for comparison, he gave a few concise characterizations of grief. It is striking that even in these short passages Freud stressed aspects that

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23. The book is the third volume of the history-making work *Attachment and Loss*. 
have also been quite important in many later interpretations. He establishes that profound grief is a reaction to the loss of a loved one, and that grief leads to a far-reaching feeling of loss that includes the abrogation of interest in the surrounding world and the abandonment of any achievement. Freud writes: “It is easy to see that this inhibition and circumscription in the ego is the expression of an exclusive devotion to its mourning, which leaves nothing over for other purposes or other interests” (Freud 1917, 153). When the bereavement process is considered, Freud was clear in regard to the complex, ambivalent and time consuming processes that take place. The mourner is able to perform “reality testing” and is aware that “the loved object no longer exists.” In other words, it is clear to the mourner that “All the libido shall be withdrawn from its attachments to this object” as Freud expresses it (154). The language that he uses here is likely the explanation for why Didion and other mourners admit that they found insight, but little consolation, in reading Freud.24 At any rate, Freud’s point was that the ego exerts an intensive resistance to giving up the relationship to the person who was loved. He writes: “This struggle can be so intense that a turning away from reality ensues, the object being clung to through the medium of a hallucinatory wish-psychosis” (ibid.). Normally respect for reality conquers, but it happens only gradually and with great use of time and energy. In the meantime, “the existence of the lost object is continued in the mind” (154).

It is evident that Freud has pretty much described the condition in which Agnes finds herself when we encounter her in the fourth act of Brand. The far-reaching impact of grief and the exclusion of interest in one’s surroundings is called “Spread of loss” and “Numbed involvement in the world” by Cochran and Claspell, and is included in their “Themes of grieving” (Cochran and Claspell 1987, 64ff). The maintaining of the deceased in what Freud called a “hallucinatory wish-psychosis” is given less emphasis in Cochran and Claspell, but is included in almost all literature about grief in the term “denial.” The mourning Agnes we meet in Ibsen clearly experiences “denial.” She “talks” to Alf as if he were still alive, she lights candles and opens the shutters on the windows so he can see in from his “place of sleep” in the graveyard, and she also visualizes him in dream-like visions:

AGNES. Oh, Brand, last night, while you were gone,
He came into my room, his cheeks
Aglow with health, and in his thin little shirt

24. See also Woodward 2009, pp. 1–7 and 234.
He toddled with faltering baby steps  
Towards me where I lay upon my bed . . .  
Stretched out his arms, called for his mother,

And with a pleading smile seemed  
To be asking me to warm him back to life!

(Ibsen 1972, 160)

And when Brand brutally throws himself into this process and wants to force through the “reality test,” Agnes feels that he is tearing “my open wound.” He orders her to close the shutters on the window and emphasizes words like graveyard and corpse, instead of the euphemisms that Agnes uses. He has no feeling for what Freud saw so clearly:

Each single one of the memories and hopes which bound the libido to the object is brought up and hyper-cathected, and the detachment of the libido from it accomplished. Why this process of carrying out the behest of reality bit by bit, which is in the nature of a compromise, should be so extraordinarily painful is not at all easy to explain in terms of mental economics. It is worth noting that this pain seems natural to us. (Freud 1917, 154)

It is not natural to Brand. Surprisingly enough, neither is it for some of those who have interpreted the drama, such as Atle Kittang in his book *Ibsens heroisme. Frå Brand til Når vi døde vågner* [Ibsen’s Heroism. From Brand to When We Dead Awaken] (2002). He writes:

…When Agnes refuses to admit the reality that her son is gone forever, refuses to acknowledge that a corpse resting in its grave no longer has any real place in our living world, and clings to the child’s possessions and effects, to all those material traces that make reminders of an absence into illusions of a presence, well then she, brutally expressed, represents precisely the type of attitude to life that, as we have seen, must be defeated if there is to be any discussion of the inner renewal in human life that both she and Brand are working towards. (Kittang 2002, 62)

Kittang perceives emotion as an “attitude to life,” and interpolates grief into a script about idealistic “renewal of human life,” where it therefore has no place.
This appears especially surprising in a scholar who otherwise was quite psychologically informed in his interpretations, and, moreover, knew his Freud.

In the extensive specialist literature about grief since Freud’s time, one rediscovers several of his observations and analyses. Larry Cochran and Emily Claspell tried to systemize the dissimilar professional positions by means of dissimilar models. They worked with a medical model, a stage model and a developmental model. In the medical model grief is described as a temporary state of illness with definite symptoms which make it possible to be diagnosed. Normally the illness requires no treatment. It will pass of its own accord. Medical assistance is only necessary in cases with complications. Cochran and Claspell take a critical attitude towards this model, both because it is oversimplified and also because there does not appear to be consensus about which symptoms are characteristic of the illness. They also believe that it seems unreasonable to define normal people’s reactions as illness, and point out that by using the illness model’s logic quite a few normal emotions would have to be considered as illnesses. The stage model depicts grief as a process with definite, recognizable stages. These can be described somewhat differently, but usually include denial, anger, negotiation, depression, panic, guilt, anxiety and acceptance. This model is found again in much of the self-help literature that is found on the market, for example in Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and David Kessler’s *On Grief and Grieving: Finding the Meaning of Grief Through the Five Stages of Loss* (2007). Cochran and Claspell’s objection to this model is that it appears linear, while from the empirical materials it is evident that many experience moving back and forth between different states in the bereavement process. Cochran and Claspell tie the developmental model specifically to John Bowlby’s contribution, and they are obviously of the opinion that his points of view are the most accurate and relevant, despite the fact that they only refer to individual articles and not to his major work, *Loss. Sadness and Depression*. Bowlby’s analysis of grief is included as a part of his comprehensive attachment theory, about which it would go too far afield to clarify here. The main idea is that the foundation for attachment behavior and emotional reactions depends on the relationship to the central attachment figure in early childhood. Patterns that are established at a young age are repeated in adult life. Bowlby’s work is based partly on psychoanalysis, and partly on ethology, control theory and cognitive psychology (Bowlby1980, 1) The framework around

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25. The choice of the term “stage model” does not seem particularly well chosen since it is evident that all three of Cochran and Claspell’s models operate with phases or stages in the bereavement process. It is therefore difficult to grasp what is distinctive about this model. As a matter of fact, the whole point for Cochran and Claspell is to portray grief by means of a dramaturgic approach in which beginning, middle and end is the explanatory basic structure.
the study of grief is personality development with childhood’s attachment pattern as the point of departure. Bowlby too operates with phases in his description of the bereavement process:

1. Phase of numbing that usually lasts from a few hours to a week and may be interrupted by outbursts of extremely intense distress and/or anger.
2. Phase of yearning and searching for the lost figure lasting some months and sometimes for years.
3. Phase of disorganization and despair.
4. Phase of greater or less degree of reorganization. (Bowlby, 85)

These phases of Bowlby accommodate to a certain degree dissimilar forms of grief, for example grief after the loss of a cohabitation partner or the loss of a child. Transferred to Ibsen’s depiction of Agnes it would be natural to think that we encounter her in the fourth act in a condition that looks like Phase 2 and Phase 3, such as they are described here. Yet one of the most striking components in Ibsen’s portrayal of Agnes’ grief is the unusual outcome of the bereavement process he depicts in the ending of act 4. I will come back to this. First let us study a few central features of Ibsen’s representation.

**EMOTIONAL SPACE**

Act 4 opens by tying the two main characters to unequally coded emotional space. The act begins when Brand comes home from a trip on the sea in a severe storm that he describes dramatically for Agnes. The most important point seems to be the effect this outdoor space has had on him: “Oh, out there I was a man,” he says and adds:

I stood exultant at the helm, and felt myself
Grow tall and strong, like the hero of a legend,
For I was the man who took command;
I knew within my bones that some great power
Had anointed me for my mysterious calling . . . (Ibsen 1972, 158).

Agnes herself immediately calls attention to the contrast with her emotional space:

Oh, it is easy to stand against a storm,
Easy to live a life of action,
But what about me, left here all alone,
And sitting silently amid the memories of grief
And pain and death? What about me?
However much I want to, I cannot
Kill my time … (ibid.).

The contrast between the man and wife is stressed already in the opening sequence. Brand “knew within his bones” that he was chosen, and grew as a heroic figure “out there.” Agnes stays confined at home and “dare not remember . . . and cannot forget!” (158). There is hardly any doubt that Ibsen is pursuing a well-known gender pattern when he places the woman in the home and the man in a place of exploits out in the world. At the same time there exists a certain “feminist” element in the fact that the woman does not at all feel that the home is a privileged place. The home represents “normalcy” as Hogan says, but Agnes does not feel any attachment to the home. It is not characterized by safety, security and tranquility. Agnes feels enclosed in crushing loneliness and grief.

The spouses are not just positioned in dissimilar emotional spaces; the dissonance between them is also soon expressed. Already in his second reply Brand starts his reprimand and chastising of his wife. One of the off-stage places in the opening sequence is the graveyard where Alf is buried. That is also an emotionally coded space – and coded differently for the two of them. Brand insists on calling the graveyard by its correct name, forthright, callously and brutally in order to try to orientate Agnes to reality. For Agnes, the place is so intensely connected to grief and longing for the deceased that she uses euphemisms such as “out there” and “that place… where he sleeps” (180). Her husband corrects her several times for this. Another off-stage space that plays an important role in the confrontations between the couple is Brand’s “chamber” or “sitting room.” For Agnes being alone is an extra burden. She is overwhelmed with grief. She even expresses this in her opening lines when Brand comes home:

> Oh how long it’s been! Don’t leave me
> Alone like that again. Say you won’t leave me!
> When I’m here all alone, I cannot
> Shake off the shadows of the night. (156)

Apparently these are feelings that Brand utilizes to punish his wife. He simply leaves her when she does not show the desired behavior, or he threatens to do so:

> “…Then your gift is cast away into the sea. You still have not surrendered all to
my demand. [He makes to go."
(190). A little later the same is repeated. Brand accuses Agnes of idolatry, and wants to leave: “Stay in the power of your idols!
[Is about to go."
] (ibid.).
In his Brand analysis, Atle Kittang writes that Ibsen put a politically-gendered explanatory aspect in the portrayal of the two, and the long and short of it is that they exhibit the methods of adapting to grief of the masculine and of the “life of women” (Kittang, 62). The point is relevant, but it must be added that there is a lack of equality in the gendered difference. If we use as a starting point, as Kittang does, that Brand really grieves as deeply as Agnes, just in a different way, it would be interesting to pursue the idea of differing grief processes a bit further.

CAUSAL AND INTENTIONAL EMOTIONS
Agnes’ feelings are causally governed. Her grief is caused by the death of her son, and there is a direct chain of cause and effect from this dramatic event in her life to the feelings she has. She does not have full cognitive self-control of her feelings, something that we know is completely common in these types of circumstances in life. It’s a question of an especially powerful emotional stimulus that leads to a widespread emotional reaction.

If we presume that the same stimulus lies behind Brand’s pattern of reaction, it would be natural to consider this as a cognitively governed form of reaction, an ideologically guided pattern of responses. Brand doesn’t just act intentionally, even his emotions are intentionally focused. Brand is a self-evident example of an important feature in the emotional life’s remarkable connections to life goals and beliefs. Powerful ideological elements in the personality can override emotionality, so that the forms of reaction are governed more by objectives for the future than by reasons from past experiences. Kittang claims that Agnes and Brand have a common goal in life of creating “the new individual.” From Ibsen’s text there is at least no doubt that Brand himself feels a call from a “great power” to save the people from “the Spirit of Compromise,” from rashness of mind, dullness of mind and madness of mind. This calling guides all his choices, even if it costs lives. If it is the case that Brand too grieves deeply over Alf’s death, then we must be able to conclude that the objectives of the calling also guide his pattern of feelings. In “A Note on Ideology,” Patrick Colm Hogan claims that ideology of this type, that is to say, “a complex of goals and beliefs” most often “are functional in relation to some social hierarchy”, put briefly, “functions to maintain the currently dominant social hierarchy” (Hogan 2011, 24). At least in the Brand/Agnes family hierarchy it functions in this way. Her causally governed reactive emotions are condemned
on an ideological basis as idolatry, while Brand’s intentional pattern of reaction is embedded as the norm in the family, the dominant ideology. It is not certain, as Kittang asserts, that the husband and wife have a common goal. At any rate Agnes protests at times against Brand’s ideological managing of the goals in their lives.

Your kingdom is too great for me . . .
Everything here is too much for me . . .
You, your calling, your aims, the lonely
Furrow you plough, your almighty will,
Each path and precipice in this benighted place, (Ibsen 1972, 161)

We have an example of the way in which Brand himself uses ideological reinterpretations in his self-understanding precisely in reactions tied to Alf’s death. In the third act there is no doubt that Brand chooses to remain in the community in order to complete his calling, despite the doctor having warned quite clearly that Alf will die if he is not moved to better climatic conditions. But Brand projects the blame for Alf’s death onto his mother by means of a religiously rooted ideology of original sin:

Oh, my little boy, my innocent lamb . . .
Your death an atonement for my mother’s deeds!
A brain distracted brought me word from Him
Who has His throne beyond the clouds, and bade
Me make a choice between my destinies.
And that same distracted brain was brought
Into this world because my mother chose wrong!
Even thus does the Lord above employ the fruits
Of guilt to feed the roots of sanity and justice.
Even thus does He hurl down upon us from on high
Retribution – unto the third generation. (178)

In my opinion here we come close to classical ideology understood as false consciousness, applied specifically in overruling of emotions, in this case feelings of guilt. Nonetheless, it emerges that Brand actually was overwhelmed by feelings in the first phase after Alf’s death, that is, in the phase that Bowlby called the “numbing” phase:

And yet . . . in the days of our most desperate anguish,
In the tremendous, overwhelming moment of our grief,
When the child was sleeping his final sleep,  
And when none of his mother’s kisses  
Could restore that smile to his dear lips . . .  
How was it then . . . ? Did I not pray then?  
…Did He look down upon  
This house of sorrow, and take pity on my tears? (179).

So as a mourner, we must view Brand as one who quite quickly after the paralysis of the very first hours, obtained a cognitive, ideological control over his feelings. His bereavement process is divergent according to most of the modern descriptions of the phases of grief.

**EMOTIONAL HEGEMONY**

Agnes’ reactions match better with professional descriptions. But also in her case, there is some deviation. In my opinion it is worth looking more closely at two elements, the absence of anger and the remarkable reversal to the feeling of freedom at the end of the act. I will return to this at the end of the chapter. Here it is a question of divergence from a widespread normal *script*. An anticipated reaction to Brand’s many onslaughts and chastening conduct would be anger, possibly counter-attack or “flight,” that is, distancing. Agnes’ pattern of responses is different. She articulates, as we have heard, a certain cautious resistance. But she seems to be devoid of anger, and she fears distancing. On the contrary, she reacts repeatedly by accepting the accusations, internalizing them and directing them towards herself. An obvious method of interpreting this is to consider her as a subjugated person, subject to a dominant ideology that she is not able to achieve significant opposition to. As Hogan points out, dominant ideology corresponds to dominant social hierarchy. The very first word that Brand says to his wife in the 4th act of Brand is “child.” Instead of an aggressive self defense strategy, Agnes’ practice in married life is characterized by internalizing the dominant ideology and subordination of the social hierarchy in the home. The hierarchical relationship between the two is plain throughout the entire dialogue, but perhaps becomes extra clearly expressed when Agnes asks Brand – just like a child – for permission to unlatch the window shutter facing the graveyard just a little bit:

AGNES. Brand, may I move aside a little  
This horrid barrier . . . this shutter,  
Just a little? Just a little crack? May I, Brand?
BRAND [at the door]. No.  
[He goes into his room.] (183).

The internalization of the dominant ideology in the home is expressed as well in many places in dialogue but alternates, as we have seen, with elements of cautious resistance. The first time Agnes apparently accepts Brand’s command in Act 4 is when she is ordered to dry her tears. Agnes answers that “…soon it will be better; Once I am through the next few days, / You will never hear me complain again” (157). She adds that she knows she is not behaving as she should.

There is a succession of such examples in the text. The most pronounced is found in the last scene, where Agnes on her own initiative comes repentantly to Brand and admits her transgression: She has kept one last piece of clothing from Alf, a cap, even though Brand had directed her to give it all away to “the woman”:

AGNES. I lied . . .  
See, I am repentant. I submit.  
You did not know, could not suspect,  
That I had not given everything away.  
BRAND. Well?  
AGNES. [takes a child’s cap, folded, from her bosom]. You see, I kept this back.  
BRAND. His cap?  
AGNES. Yes, wet with tears.  
As with the cold sweat of death . . .  
Since then, I’ve worn it next my heart! (190)

In this play, Ibsen gives an illustrative example of what the professor of philosophy Alison M. Jaggar calls “Emotional Hegemony and Emotional Subversion.” In a study of affective narratology, the question of emotionality and power must be included as a central concern. Emotional hegemony does not only shape social structures in the family arena, but in society generally, including cultural and political communities. Jaggar writes:

…mature human emotions are neither instinctive nor biologically determined, although they may have developed out of presocial, instinctive responses. Like everything else that is human, emotions in part are socially constructed; like all social constructs, they are historical products, bearing the marks of the society that constructed them. Within the very language of emotion, in our basic
definitions and explanations of what it is to feel pride or embarrassment, resentment or contempt, cultural norms and expectations are embedded. Simply describing ourselves as angry, for instance, presupposes that we view ourselves as having been wronged, victimized by the violation of some social norm. Thus, we absorb the standards and values of our society in the very process of learning the language of emotion, and those standards and values are built into the foundation of our emotional constitution. (Jaggar 1992, 159)

Jaggar here is close to viewpoints we have also encountered in Martha Nussbaum and what Nussbaum calls “narrative emotions.” However, Jaggar adds an additional factor:

Within a hierarchical society, the norms and values that predominate tend to serve the interest of the dominant group. Within a capitalist, white supremacist, and male-dominant society, the predominant values will tend to serve the interests of rich white men. (ibid.)

Brand is hardly first and foremost depicted as a typical “rich white man,” although after his mother’s death, he actually becomes quite well-to-do. The configuration Ibsen has created is nevertheless a rather classic power structure: man – woman; reason – feelings; strength – weakness; feats in world of work – isolated home; the power of the word – the torment of the heart. The feminist point is conspicuous, but Jaggar is also engaged in widening the perspective as she considers the problematics of emotional hegemony. Emotional hegemony contributes to “forming our emotional constitution in particular ways” and thereby society ensures “its own perpetuation” (ibid.). Society’s emotional hegemony does not just befall women, and not just women in family relationships, but all under-privileged groups in a society; Jaggar mentions races, classes and sexual minorities.

“OUTLAW EMOTIONS”

As Jaggar represents it, the power of emotional hegemony appears to function in two ways. Both are clearly illustrated in Ibsen’s Brand.

In the first place, hegemonic power is exerted by the exclusion of what Jaggar calls “outlaw emotions.” Despite powerful norms it is still the case that “people do not always experience the conventionally acceptable emotions” (Jaggar, 159–60). These emotions that are not accepted Jaggar calls “outlaw emotions.” As far as I can see, it is difficult to imagine a more persistent and heartless battle against
“outlaw emotions” than the one Brand conducts in his wife’s responses to grief. He acts on the behalf of family hegemony, and fights to sustain the dominant ideology that guides their relationship. The result, to which we shall return, is tragic in the sense that it leads to Agnes’ death. This is in accordance with Jaggar’s observations: “People who experience conventionally unacceptable, or what I call ‘outlaw,’ emotions often are subordinated individuals who pay a disproportionately high price for maintaining the status quo” (160).

Secondly, hegemonic power is exerted by the internalizing effects that the dominant ideology produces. Jaggar’s viewpoints are clear:

> Whatever our color, we are likely to feel what Irving Thalberg has called “Visceral racism”; whatever our sexual orientation, we are likely to be homophobic; whatever our class, we are likely to be at least somewhat ambitious and competitive; whatever our sex, we are likely to feel contempt for women. (159)

We have already seen how these effects influence Agnes. Jaggar’s main point seems to be that the subjugation of emotional hegemony is destructive when it is experienced by the individual, that is, in isolation.

> When unconventional emotional responses are experienced by isolated individuals, those concerned may be confused, unable to name their experience; they may even doubt their own sanity. Women may come to believe that they are “emotionally disturbed…” (160)

Still, Jaggar’s feminist notion is that by joining together and forming fellowships with other “outlaws,” the destructive effects can be counteracted, and groups of societal critics can be created – to the advantage of the entire society, a point of view that likely was the basis for the feminist movement of the 1970s. However, Agnes is prevented from doing this because of her isolated position in the home.

But Brand manages this to a pronounced degree. And on this point we approach a new complexity in Ibsen’s play. The case is that Brand finds himself in a similar position in the village society that Agnes occupies in the family. Agnes’ grief is only an “outlaw emotion” within Brand’s family governance. In the village society’s governance, it is Brand’s extreme passion for his calling that creates an “outlaw emotion.” That is why he constantly comes in conflict with the society’s representatives, the mayor, the doctor and the dean. However his reactions in encounter with the village society’s emotional hegemony are quite different than Agnes’ encounters with Brand. Here there is no internalization of hegemonic val-
ues. Brand does not make any compromises, he stands his ground. That is the reason that so many have perceived him as a hero. He does not retreat from his own truths. Quite the contrary, from the first episode in the drama it is evident that Brand is provoked by opposition. In contrast to the isolated Agnes, Brand, the man of action, does what he can to create a critical fellowship of opposition that will be able to compete with the mayor’s majority of rash, dull and mad citizens. And for a while he is successful at this. When the mayor appears at Brand’s home in Act 4, it is precisely in order to surrender in the struggle between them as Brand now has the majority of support in the village. But what Ibsen shows, and what Jaggar does not address, is the transitory nature of such alliances. Ultimately Brand suffers the same fate in his social community as Agnes does in her family one. Death is waiting. The people of the community turn against Brand in Act 5, “exclude” him and chase him up in the mountains.

DISTORTED EMOTIONALITY

This brings us to the ending. One of the riddles of the play is the reversal in Agnes’ feelings towards the end of Act 4, in what proves to be the “death scene.” The scene is just as ambiguous as the end of the drama in Act 5 – which is one of the most debated and controversial text passages in Norwegian literary history. Beaten totally down and robbed of everything, Agnes does not feel desperation or despair, as one would expect. Her script is different. As I have already mentioned, Agnes herself brings the last remnant from Alf and gives it to Brand with the confession that she has lied, and that she feels remorse. To Brand’s question, she even answers that she is giving up the cap willingly. However immediately afterwards she says, “Robbed . . . stripped of everything . . .” (Ibsen 1972, 191). Then the remarkable reversal occurs:

[She stands motionless for a moment; little by little the expression on her face changes to radiant joy, BRAND comes back; she rushes joyfully to meet him, throws her arms about his neck and cries:]
I am free, Brand! I am free! (191).

At this point in the drama it is completely decisive which perspective the reader or spectator uses in understanding the play. In a psychological, secular interpretation there is no positive meaning in that a healthy person in the prime of life dies. Radiant joy and feelings of freedom fit poorly with such a departure from life. Certainly some of Agnes’ statements can be interpreted as expressions of freedom
from the weighty power of grief: “All the terrors / That weighed like a nightmare on my mind / Have now been cast out into the abyss!” (ibid.). From just such expressions one could imagine that Agnes is experiencing a breakthrough in the grief process, as Bowlby has described it; that is to say that she has reached a phase of “greater or less degree of reorganization.” Brand also chimes in: “Yes! Now you have truly conquered” (Ibsen 1972,191).

But it is no reorganization of life that Agnes experiences. It is a departure from life that she is about to experience. She is a person who is dying of a broken heart or who has been hounded to death. That she herself is aware of death emerges when she several times remembers a Biblical quotation: “‘He who sees Jehovah face to face/ Shall surely die.’”

A religious interpretative perspective is required to find a positive meaning in Agnes’ emotional state at the end of Act 4. What she expresses is a breakthrough of a religious realization. An affirmative reading of her own statements demand that one assumes a belief in life after death. It is a heavenly life after death that Agnes beholds:

Look there, on high!
Do you see him, standing
In the radiance of the throne,
Carefree as he was in life, and
Holding out his arms to us?
If I had a thousand voices,
If I dared to, if I could,
I should not raise one whisper
To beg him back again.
Oh, how great, how rich is God
In all his ways and wonders! (191–92).

But it is not Jehovah Agnes sees, but Alf. She is suddenly reconciled to his death. Read at face value, Agnes experiences a form of religious euphoria at the end of her life as she looks visionally into the hereafter.

However I must admit that this is an interpretation that I find it difficult to agree with. To me, in the last scene Agnes is a completely broken person who rejoices in her own destruction, gives thanks to him who has bullied and bewildered her, and displays feelings that reflect internalized ideology rather than actual circumstances of life. The feelings do not appear false, not even composite or ambivalent, just lacking in agreement with reality. Perhaps when the internalization process
has not only gained entrance ideologically in the personality, but also has conquered emotional life, a concept such as brainwashing can then be used? In the midst of “radiant happiness” the scene stands as totally heart-wrenching.

It is difficult to know how widespread feelings such as this are in the real world—and what kind of designation it should have. (Does it have one?) Currently media operate with the concept “radicalization” about people who feel religious euphoria at their own or others’ deaths, but that designation scarcely reflects a psychological analysis, and is unsatisfactory in Agnes’ case. In connection with the effort to explore an affective narratology this phenomenon presents a challenge. It is hardly a question of either causal or intentionally driven emotions, or of ambivalent feelings. It concerns a narrated story in which the involved actors experience an affective course of actions that misrepresents the events, as the reader perceives it. In Agnes’ case the disparity evokes empathy, and, as Hogan writes: “empathy tends to work against dominant ideology” (Hogan 2011, 139). The portrayal counteracts Brand, despite Agnes thanking him: “And thank you especially for this! How faithfully you guided me” (Ibsen 1972, 193).

But there are also cases of distorted emotionality that have a different effect, for example in stories about pathological murderers or sadists. Bret Easton Ellis’ American Psycho could be an example. In such cases one can speak about perverted emotionality. But this designation does not fit cases like Agnes’ very well either. Regardless, the theoretical point is that distorted emotionality is a phenomenon that occurs in narrative stories, and must be included in affective narratology’s repertoire of categories. And Ibsen’s portrayal of Agnes’ death stands as an unforgettable example.26

GUT REACTIONS

After thanking Brand for leading her to freedom, Agnes reverses the power play. She portends her own death, and places Brand himself in a situation of choice in which he is encouraged to sacrifice everything:

Now you stand in the valley of the Choice.
On you now falls the burden
Of this ‘All or Nothing’! (192)

26. Of course it can be difficult to establish text-analytically whether a distorted emotion occurs or simply if one as the individual reader would have felt differently in an equivalent situation. I have attempted elsewhere to reason from the text’s global composition that there is such a distorted emotion in Ibsen’s Brand. See Andersen 1997, 116 ff.
Brand does not understand what she means: “Your words are wild. All the torment/ Of your struggle now is over.” Agnes does not think that they are. She challenges Brand from a position of invulnerability; she has nothing left to lose: “Have you forgotten what I said:/ ‘He who sees Jehovah face to face Shall surely die’?” (ibid.). Then she reminds him of everything he has to sacrifice, if it’s true as he has said that it is a question of offering all or nothing. She utters lines that are reminiscent of Brand’s own demands of Agnes that she sacrifice her grief, her memories and her sinful longings:

Are you forgetting that the baptism
Of your calling binds you here . . .
And of your sacrifice as well?
Are you forgetting the thousand souls
It is your mission to redeem right here . . .
Those whom the Lord bade you to lead
Onward to the springs of their salvation?
Choose, at this crossroads in your life! (193).

In a sense Agnes’ reversal of the power play look like wicked revenge from one who stands on the threshold of death. But Brand refuses the challenge, and says “I have no choice” (ibid.). Then Agnes takes her leave of him in the form of an ambiguous good-night.

What is interesting in this context, that is, in connection with a study of affective narratology, are Brand’s reactions when he himself is placed in situations of serious choices. This especially becomes evident just as Agnes portends her death. Brand’s immediate reaction is vehement protest:

[shrinks back] Oh, what fateful
Fire is this you kindle? No!
It shall never, never be!
In my hands a giant’s strength.
You must not, shall not leave me!
Let all else on earth be swept away,
I can do without it all . . .
But never, never without you! (192).

But still, it is this he does a minute later when he says he does not have a choice to make. He has plainly actually just had the choice of bringing her back to the
living: “The woman still is sitting there outside—” (ibid.); he can restore the situation to what it was before he took everything from her: “...If you dare do this, and will, I am your wife as I was before” (193). The scene is a clear repetition of the choice Brand makes in Act 3 regarding Alf’s fate. Brand’s spontaneous reaction when he learns that the child is doomed to death if they do not move away is immediate departure:

Tonight, this afternoon, this minute!
Oh, he shall grow strong and healthy . . .
No icy blasts, no arctic gales
Shall ever freeze again that little breast. (148)

However, after that it only takes a few minutes before he has changed his mind. When he has thought about it, he would rather follow his calling than save his son. What we see in this situation is a type of emotional reaction that Alison Jaggar calls gut responses. In Brand’s case, they are after quite a short time set aside and overridden by ideological considerations. But it is nonetheless clear that Brand does have such gut responses. Gut responses are in accordance with society’s dominant values, and will be regarded by most as natural reactions. Gut responses are not the same as instinctive biological reactions such as blushing or ducking if an object approaches your face. Gut responses reflect the values of society, and are, in that sense, social constructions – although care for one’s own progeny appears to be among the most universal inclinations in the entire animal kingdom. That Brand has such immediate gut responses, but in the next instance sets them reflexively aside, show both his ambivalent feelings relative to the society of which he is a part, and his cognitively integrated emotional script. Usually emotional scripts work by triggering reactions of feelings that form fixed sequences, and such sequences will most often be experienced as “natural” or automated. In the case of Brand we encounter a type of personality that has forced itself into a script that violates the automatic gut response controls and creates a new “unnatural” pattern of reactions. Such gut responses and the violation of them in newly created ideologically controlled scripts also belong among the repertoire of affective narratology’s phenomena. In principle they appear as ambiguous. In Brand’s case, they very likely evoke alarm and aversion inasmuch as they violate such fundamental common values as concern for life and health of one’s nearest and dearest. What is most frightening about the ideological transgression of gut responses is that there is every indication that there exist no values that the human being is not capable of setting aside. But in a critical perspective, the phenomenon could
be important. There are probably *gut responses* in our culture that must be violated if necessary changes in society are going to take place. Perhaps it is also from this perspective that many have been able to consider Brand a hero figure, one who was capable of violating *gut responses* of the dull minded.

**CONCLUSION**

Emotions are an inescapable part of most literary depictions whether it concerns epic narratives, poetry or drama. Without any form of emotional charge almost all literature would evaporate quite unnoticed and mix with empty air. Authors write their texts with commitment, perhaps in frustration, anger, despair, longing or grief. Readers and the public likewise respond with active engagement and empathy, feeling sympathy and antipathy. They experience suspense together with the literary characters and are happy for them in their joy and grieve with them in sorrow. One knows all the time that it concerns fictional characters, and this plays an important, but not decisive role. We are probably not equipped with a separate emotional system for use in fictional contexts, but we have the awareness of fiction. We do feel joy, sorrow or fear when we read but in a remarkable way it does not involve the same type of joy, sorrow or fear we would feel in the real world. On their side, literary figures do not “have” feelings, but they have *narrated* feelings. And that is good enough. They work. We laugh, we cry, we feel intense excitement together with them.

There are many different interpretations of Henrik Ibsen’s *Brand*. We react differently to actions and feeling of both real and fictional people. But it is unlikely that scholars would have spent parts of their lives in trying to understand this literary work if it had not engaged us, shocked us and evoked our sympathy and antipathy. There are few works that have elicited more disagreement among professionals than Ibsen’s *Brand*. Eroll Durbach has summarized the disagreement over the conflicting views of the main character, Brand:

He’s a saint – he’s a sadist. He is God’s appointed Knight of Faith – he’s a self-appointed killer, who murders in the name of sacrifice. He’s a man whose extraordinary visionary imagination and whose questing spirit defy all moral judgements upon his conduct – he’s a destructive neurotic whose mission arouses ethical disgust. He burns with an energy that transforms his spirit – he is life denying, cold, and loveless. (Durbach 1994, 71–72)
In this chapter I have focused specifically on the conversations between the married couple Agnes and Brand in Act 4 because these scenes especially accentuate the contrasts Durbach calls attention to. They also show to what degree the contrasts involve the emotions of the participants. The central driving force of the play is Brand’s passion for his calling or his personal passion for truth. This is seriously tested, but stands above everything else for Brand. Brand is confronted with danger and fear and put to the test in both Acts 1 and 2. But Brand is fearless, and because of that he is made a heroic figure in the drama and in the eyes of the village inhabitants. In Acts 3 and 4 he is put to the test in his own home amongst his nearest and dearest where it is a question of the lives and health of his son and his wife. But even towards them, Brand proclaims his uncompromising passion for his mission, and he sacrifices both of them.

In Act 4 we have seen how Ibsen challenges Brand’s passion for his calling with Agnes’ grief after the death of her son. And we have seen that Ibsen’s depiction contains a good deal of knowledge of the psychology of grief; even that he is well on the way to anticipating later specialist literature in the field. Brand, in turn, exhibits no such insight. He disciplines his wife ruthlessly during life’s most difficult phase, and deprives her of the last remnants of her capability for life. In this struggle between the married couple where dissimilar emotions resist each other, we have also seen that emotionality, like most aspects of life, are concerned with power, hegemony, dominance and ideology. Brand executes his hegemonic power, with catastrophic results in Act 4 as in Act 3.

As a part of this study in affective narratology, the study of Brand has, in the first place, shown that authors can have an exceptional ability to portray specific emotional reactions to their existential depths, even independent of and prior to specialist’s investigations. In my opinion, Act 4 of Brand is an eminent study in the psychology of grief. Further, the Brand study has revived and brought to light several elements that must have a place in affective narratology’s special repertoire of phenomena, with their attending concepts. I have attempted to establish some of these, partly with the help of Alison Jaggar’s philosophy.

Ibsen makes active use of emotional space, like many other authors. Emotional spaces and their function in affective narratology have been discussed earlier in this book, and will not be further elaborated here. The same is true of emotional scripts, which have also shown themselves to be useful in this Ibsen analysis; that is, expectations and knowledge about how emotions enter into connections and shape sequences of emotional events. Because there are widespread normal scripts as well as individual scripts, it makes sense to see such scripts in relation to each
other. In the case of Agnes, it proved especially interesting to discuss violation of expected normal scripts.

Additionally, it was natural to examine more closely Brand and Agnes’ dissimilar forms of reaction. I tried to describe these as, respectively, causally controlled by the dramatic occurrence that Alf’s death represented for Agnes, and intentionally controlled by the goal Brand had set for his life’s work. In that connection the relationship between ideology and emotionality was also topical. The intentional control of Brand’s reaction patterns had its background in the faith and conviction he possessed.

Perhaps most important in the study of the relationship in the domesticity of the two was the exercise of masculine emotional hegemony. Power is practiced partly by sanctions and partly by ideology. Certainly one can say that Brand uses both means towards his wife to a certain extent. In any case, she accepts and internalizes the dominant ideology of the home. In connection with the execution of hegemonic power, Alison Jaggar’s philosophy also contributed with the concept of outlaw emotions. Brand’s exercise of emotional power included making Agnes’ grief into an outlaw emotion in the home. Similarly, the complexity of the play was in one way expressed by Brand’s passion for his mission appearing as an outlaw emotion in the community.

Agnes’ individual emotional script deviated from expected normalcy in several ways, among others, the “radiant joy” and feeling of freedom towards the end of the play appear as an enigmatic reversal in her reactions. I attempted to describe this by means of the term distorted emotionality, and presume that that term will be useful also in other special cases.

While such distorted emotions violate expected normalcy, Jaggar’s concept of gut responses designate the opposite. Ibsen’s text showed how even such an ideologically controlled personality as Brand has remnants of powerful gut responses in dramatic situations. They correspond to society’s common values, and occur more or less automatically. But Brand overrules them reflexively by means of ideology.

All of the phenomena mentioned here and the accompanying terms can and should be included in a repertoire of concepts for an affective narratology. I shall return to this in the book’s conclusion.
Affective Narratology in J.P. Jacobsen’s *Gurresange* (1867–1870) and Arnold Schönberg’s *Gurrelieder* (1901–1911)

In the relationship between the forms of art three fundamental elements often play a central role: emotion, imagination and narration. These can be regarded as basic elements in literature, music, visual genre and multimedia forms of expression such as songs, opera, ballet, film and music videos. Emotion, performance abilities, and narrative therefore also have major meaning in the encounters between the art forms in specific works. In more recent theory development these elements have come into focus in interesting ways, both with philosophers such as Martha Nussbaum and literary researchers like Patrick Colm Hogan.

What I will do in this chapter is sketch a case study with a point of departure in one of the most famous and magnificent cross-aesthetic projects involving Nordic literature, Arnold Schönberg’s *Gurrelieder*, based on J. P. Jacobsen’s *Gurresange*. I will describe the two artists’ methods of narration generally, to show how they compose their narrative elements and how they make use of imagination. I will also examine their distinctive characteristics specifically as affective story tellers. In that context I will attempt to describe the fundamental elements of affective narrative. The investigation will also be an analysis of adaptation that primarily will show stylistic transformation with affective implications. However, I wish to emphasize that I regard the works as two independent works of art.

Schönberg’s *Gurrelieder* is a massive cantata for large orchestra, five vocal soloists, three four-part male choruses, a full mixed chorus and a narrator. The work requires 200 singers and 150 musicians. It was written by a twenty-six year old self-taught composer, but clearly is modeled after works of Wagner and Brahms. J. P. Jacobsen’s *Gurresange* was written by the poet of about the same age in 1867–1870. Jacobsen’s work consists of nine poems set together in a cycle with a thematic basis in the ballad tradition surrounding “Valdemar and Tove,” a tradition found in all of Scandinavia. In Denmark the Valdemar and Tove topic became a popular

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27. This chapter was previously published in *Edda* 6–3–2015.
motif for a series of Romantic writers such as H. C. Andersen, Adam Oehlenschläger, Christian Winther, B. S. Ingemann, J. L. Heiberg, Carsten Hauch, and also J. P. Jacobsen. The ballad material has a slight historical link to King Valdemar I or Valdemar Atterdag, but the connection is truly both vague and uncertain.

The motifs that are included in the tradition are, first, the royal milieu in which the action takes place. Secondly, the conflict is comprised of a triangle motif between King Valdemar, his mistress Tove and Queen Sofie. The scorned queen takes her revenge by luring Tove into an overheated sauna where Tove is killed. Thirdly, love’s transcending power is subsequently depicted by the king and his men riding as ghosts in the night on a wild chase after Tove. There is also a fourth motif in some variants, which is a rebellion-against-God theme which concerns Valdemar renouncing salvation if he can only recover Tove’s love.28

Through a Romantic filter, the material became a story about the power of love and the unconditional right of emotions even when confronted with moral and institutional arrangements such as marriage, for example. This is similar to the even more famous legend of Tristan and Isolde. Sympathies lie constantly with Tove and Valdemar. The entire literary tradition concerns a standard love story in which narration and emotion are concentrated in an aesthetic cluster with built-in power to survive for hundreds of years. The actual interpretation of love changed from the time of the ballads of the middle ages to Romanticism, from magical obsession to an inner emotional force. But the topic moves us regardless of the implied conceptions.

GURESEGANGE

What J. P. Jacobsen did in relation to the ballad genre was to reduce perhaps the two most important narrative elements in the ballad, namely the dialogues and the epic formulas. Jacobsen narrates by means of emotional focus points drawn from the epic progression. The focus points emerge as moments when important ingredients in the story are crystallized. They involve change, but the changes are not depicted epically. In this way Jacobsen is able to apply one of his favorite genre, the fragment, even in the portrayal of epic subject matter. This narrative method has been described by several Jacobsen scholars, most recently by Jens Lohfert Jørgensen in his book Sygdomstegn. J. P. Jacobsen, Niels Lyhne og tuberkulose (2014) [ Symptoms. J. P. Jacobsen, Niels Lyhne and tuberculosis]. Jørgensen uses

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28. I will not in this chapter go into details of the relationship between Jacobsen’s text and possible folkloristic models. Such a discussion would require a separate study. I will instead refer the reader to Rosiek 2015.
the concept of “narrative tableau” and explains it in the following way: “The narrative tableau is an epic form of expression, that implements a scene as an autonomous and concluded picture in the narrative sequence. The tableau appears as a momentary fixation or solidification of the narrated sequence, a discontinuous moment, that creates room for a detailed description” (Jørgensen 2014, 71). Jørgensen refers both to Goethe’s “pregnant moment” and to Horace Engdahl’s “Anteckningar om fragmentet” [Notes on the fragment] (72). Jørgensen asserts that the tableau “possesses a large potential for meaning, but without rendering it concrete in a decided sense” (75). He does not mention Gurresange, and his topic of interest is quite different than in this analysis. But it is evident from his point of view that he believes that this method of narration is fundamentally characteristic for the entire authorship.

In the case of Gurresange the technique means that the epic plot of the story about Valdemar and Tove must either be known ahead of time, or has to be reconstructed by means of the imagination from the few “pregnant moments” found in the text. Jacobsen tones down the drama of the triangle and emphasizes the love motif and the motif of rebellion against God. Narratologically described, one of the distinctive features in Jacobsen’s narrative is an extensive use of ellipses. The most important is the omission of the entire story of Tove’s death. We move directly from a high-flown poem in which Valdemar extols “wonderful Tove” to the grief after her death. Jacobsen compensates for the downplaying of the epic progression by introducing another, more lyrical course. Throughout the entire cycle of poems one follows a lapse in time of half a 24-hour day. It starts with twilight, then the moon and stars rise, torches burn, we are along for the dramatic nightly ride before it all ends with the sunrise in the last poem. However, it is not a specific night that is the temporal scope of the action. The progress of time is indeterminate but comprehensive. The coherency-shaping nightly frame around the cycle still emerges because the author several times uses iterative expressions in indications of times of day: “each midnight,” “every night.”

It is natural to perceive the poem cycle as compositionally binary (see Fig. 1). The first principal part portrays the love between the two lovers while they are alive. Then the striking narrative ellipsis occurs, during which, according to the ballad tradition, Tove is murdered. The second main part depicts reactions after Tove’s death. If we look more closely at the first section, it is natural to see this too as binary. The cycle begins with two nature lyrical poems, one placed in the mouth of Valdemar, the other in Tove’s. In the first, it is evening; calm and silence descends over the landscape. In the second, the moon comes up, it is night, and the entire landscape appears as if a dream landscape. These introductory poems func-
tion as a prelude, foreplay both literarily and erotically. The prelude is injected with speed and dynamics in the two following poems, a horseback ride of great speed through the forest towards the castle where the lovers will meet, and a jubilant, randy dance by the one who is waiting. Then the description of the lovers’ tryst between Valdemar and Tove is depicted in five sequences.

Fig. 129

The second main section, which describes reactions after Tove’s death, can again be regarded as binary. Grief and Valdemar’s rebellion against God as a result of the loss of his love is described in the first part. Two hunting scenes comprise the second part. The first portrays Valdemar and his men as ghosts on a wild ride searching for Tove at night. The farmer and Claus the fool, who function as trigger figures, appear here also, and clarify the effect that the action has on those involved. The second

29. The figurations are a visualization of the composition analyses that form the basis of the chapter. The analyses and visualizations are inspired by Peter Brask’s compositional analytical system, compiled in Brask 1974.
hunt is a nature description, “The wild hunt of the summer wind,” that insures the cycle ends as it began, with a lyrical natural element. It all concludes with the sunrise and the awakening of all living things. In this way the cycle is framed by sunset and quiet calm on one side, and sunrise and smiling resurrection on the other.

An affective plot corresponds to this thematic progression, and comes explicitly to expression in many of the poems (see Fig. 2). Most of the affects can be said to run parallel with terms in musical performance. In some situations, the tempo and dynamics are also explicitly revealed in the texts. It begins with two calm poems with a nature ambience. The dynamics are subdued (“quiet”). The mood is pensive, dreamlike (“…in their own river of dreams”; “…expression for what God has dreamed”). Were one to use the conventional musical terms of performance, it would be natural to characterize the first two poems as elegiac and pastoral.

Fig. 2

The most common designations of execution in Romantic scores are the following: appassionato (passionately), elegy (elegiac), eroico (heroically), grottesco (grotesquely), jubiloso (jubilant), lamentoso (lamentable), misterioso (mysteriously), pastorale (pastorally), religioso (devoutly), scherzando (playfully), tranquillo (tranquilly). My point is not primarily to force Jacobsen’s cycle into a traditional musical vocabulary, but rather to find a useful method for describing his affective composition.
A clearly affective and dynamic change-over occurs in the next two poems (III and IV). Longing and passion dominate both Valdemar and Tove’s feelings, and the dynamics become more intense in Valdemar’s rapid ride through the forest, and Tove’s pounding heart. An appropriate musical designation would be appassionato. In Section V of the cycle “The Meeting,” jubilant love and joy characterize the lyrical subjects. But the section is comprised of five separate poems, and there is a certain affective difference between them. The first two express Valdemar and Tove’s uninhibited feelings of happiness. In a word, jubiloso. The happiness of love still reigns in the next two poems, but for both of the lovers a seriousness arises as the momento mori motif appears. This gravity is dealt with by a classical carpe diem reaction. In the last poem in Section V, a quiet peacefulness descends over Valdemar’s happiness. The intense jubilation falls to rest, and the suitable musical term would be tranquillo.

Poem VI, “The Wood Dove’s Song,” is the lamentation of grief (lamentoso). Not calm, apathetic grief, but intense and turbulent, despairing grief. It evolves further into fury and rebellion against God in the next poem (VII). One could perhaps use the musical emotional term religioso.

This is followed by the extensive Section VIII, “The Wild Hunt,” which expresses grief, pain and longing, but which is carried out in an excessive form of expression, in which the specters cannot find peace because the longing for love is stronger than death. It begins with a call of reveille, the night is “the Dawn of Specters,” and so they’re off on the nightly ride of trouble and horror for all others than Valdemar’s men. The musical performance designation that is suitable is grottesco.

Already in its title, “The Summer Wind’s Wild Hunt,” the last poem gives notice that it stands in direct relationship to the previous one. We are told that both are about a wild hunt. But while VIII is about the specters dramatic and grotesque search for the murdered partner in love, the lyrical voice in IX addresses itself to the flowers groundsel and chamomile, and to glow-worms and spiders, notifying all that it is time to wake up. The sun rises. Day comes. The poem opens up an interpretive space one is not sure how to frequent. I understand the poem as a humorous reflection of the grotesque nightly hunt. We move from ghosts to lady-bugs, from dead kings to awakening frogs; and from night to morning, from grotesque drama to dream-like jocularity (scherzando). When all is said and done, the last poem opens the possibility that the entire preceding drama has been a dream which one can contemplate with humor in the light of day. But others have used the rising sun and the reawakening motif to interpret a traditional Romantic recon-
ciliation in the last poem. That is what Arnold Schönberg, for example, has done; something to which I shall return.

A summary of the affective structure in J. P. Jacobsen’s work will show a chiastic structure of parallel contrasts. The introductory nature ambience corresponds to the concluding nature ambience. The cycle begins and ends in a pastoral mood. The contrast consists in that the introductory poems are elegiac, serious and melancholy, while the concluding nature poem tends in the direction of the humorous or playful (scherzando).

Likewise there is a parallel contrast between poems III and IV on the one side and VIII on the other. Both sections are highly passionate, marked by longing for the beloved. But in poems III and IV, there is intense forward-looking longing towards an imminent meeting between living lovers, while in VIII the longing looks grotesquely backward from the realm of the dead towards a lost love. Affectively, Section V and poems VI and VII are clearly contrasting in that the first poems rejoice over an ecstatic lovers’ tryst, and grow quiet after the consummated act of love, while poems VI and VII grieve despairingly over the same love once it is lost, and revolts in fury and rebellion against life’s supreme authority of fate.

**GURRELIEDER**

Schönberg demonstrates his thematic composition in a different way than Jacobsen. His work is divided into three parts (see fig. 3). He allows Valdemar’s rebellion against God its own short mid-section alone. In this way he includes the lament of grief “The Wood Dove’s Song” in the first part. He fills the gaping ellipsis with an orchestral interlude. Schönberg also indicates another striking move: he picks out the cycle’s last lines of verse, the very sunrise, and makes them independent or expands them to a pronounced and majestic final chorus. Otherwise, it is conspicuous that Schönberg follows Jacobsen’s text – in a German translation – word for word, without much use of repetition or melismata, which is otherwise quite common in vocal music.

31. One reason for this could be that Schönberg himself had a strong and ambivalent relationship with religion. He was a Jew, but converted to Christianity. But when the persecutions started under the Nazis, he converted back to Judaism.

32. Several notes sung to one syllable of text.
The affective progression in Schönberg’s composition is very complex, and the work is much too extensive for me to analyze in detail here. That is a task for musicology. Schönberg does not use the Italian performance terminology in his score but instead employs German entries. They determine both tempo and the affective character. It begins “Mässig bewegt” (moderately agitated), and the composer soon shows that he is engaged with nuances; soon the performance is “Ein weni- ger bewegt” (lesser agitation). Some entries are not, as a matter of course, so easy to interpret, as, for example, “Gedehnt” (stretched out). Others are easier, for example, “Etwas langsamer” (somewhat slower). A heavily utilized term is “Sehr lebhaft” (very lively), which shows that Schönberg was looking for strong expression. The same is shown by entries such as “nach und nach steigernd” (rising bit by bit); Schönberg loved crescendos and decrescendos. What is most conspicuous in Schönberg’s affective composition in relation to Jacobsen’s is that there are so many sudden changes. Of course this is because Schönberg’s work is so much more comprehensive, but the reversals also come very frequently, which must be said to be a result of Schönberg’s style. In his introductory book *Præludier til*
musik af Arnold Schönberg (1976), Jan Maegaard writes: “In ex. 34 the first measure symbolizes unhappiness, the second one grief and the two last measures love, as the king had for Tove” (Maegaard 1976, 52). Still, the variations do not come quite so closely. But even if Maegaard is exaggerating, he is correct that the sudden affective changes generally occur closely and that the effects are strong the entire time. Malcolm MacDonald also places primary emphasis on the emotional aspects in his characterization of Gurrelieder: “The Gurrelieder then confidently extends this command [of the most advanced musical language of the day] over a far wider emotional range on the largest possible scale …” (MacDonald, 1976, 67).

However Gurrelieder also displays another feature of Schönberg’s compositional artistry, one that MacDonald believes is common in his oeuvre, that is, the aspect of development or “the principle of ‘developing variation’” In a traditional sonata movement, the development is the part in which the introduced themes and motifs are elaborated, set up against each other, moved to new keys and explored for their musical potentiality. In Schönberg, this method of development has become a stylistic fundamental principle of composition. Nils E. Bjerkestrand also makes a point about this in his book Fra Debussys fødsel til Schönbergs død. Om veiskiller i komposisjonshistorien (2005): “Simultaneously the principle of thematic processing and development surpasses the traditional movement-part for development of the theme – and becomes instead a basic idea for the entire work” (Bjerkestrand 2005, 65). Bjerkestrand writes this in a commentary to the work Pelleas and Melisande, but he also claims that the large changes both in movement technique and when it concerns musical form was a consequence of the general weakening of tonality in the transition from late-Romantic to Modernism. One consequence was, according to Bjerkestrand, “great emotional fusillades as in Schönberg’s Gurrelieder” (ibid., 60). The principle of development can actually be seen on all levels in Gurrelieder. Ethan Haimo points out that the orchestral overture builds on thematic and motif material from the cycle’s first song, but that “the effect of this material is completely transformed in the introduction” (Haimo 2009, 57). He also writes that the orchestral interlude between Valdemar’s praising of Tove (in “O wunderliche Tove”) and Tove’s death (in “Stimme der Waldtaube”) “draws upon themes from the first nine songs” (ibid., 59). So this can be interpreted as the developmental part of the first section of the composition. But also internally in the individual songs, the use of themes and motifs are reminiscent of the developmental principle and techniques of adaptation. A good example is precisely “Stimme der Waldtaube,” where an introductory hailing motif (“Tauben von Gurre!”) shifts to a very pronounced “Tot ist Tove” motif and
is contrasted with several other motifs, one of which is a very elegiac “weit flog ich” motif (“weit flog ich, Klage sucht’ ich”) that is repeated in varying form several times, and is partly linked with the introductory hailing motif, partly contrasted with other motifs in a complex, but especially effective and affective compositional form. There are also examples of motifs that are continued in varying form from song to song, and in this way shape both connections and contrast. We see this, for example, in the characteristic motif in Valdemar’s song “So tanzen die Engel;” it is well prepared for in the preceding songs, both in the ending of the previous Valdemar-song (“Ross! Mein Ross!”) and in the interlude between this and the following Tove-song (“Sterne jubeln”).

The work Gurrelieder begins with an orchestral overture which in almost program music fashion conjures up the pastoral atmosphere from the poem cycle’s two opening texts. But Schönberg has not at all created a musical textual depiction that follows in a slavish way the affective pattern I have called attention to in Jacobsen. For example, Schönberg’s version of Valdemar’s “Es ist Mitternachtszeit” in Section V is more affectively composite than in Jacobsen. A highlight of the work is Schönberg’s presentation of “Stimme der Waldtaube,” a composition emotionally moving and rich in motifs.

We find the greatest divergence in the two works’ affective narrative towards the end. Jan Maegaard has commented on this in Præludier til musik af Arnold Schönberg. Maegaard believes that the work is heavily influenced by German Romantic music and philosophy (Maegaard 1976, 44). This point is certainly correct, and results in some interesting reflections by Maegaard. Wagner’s influence on Schönberg was naturally great in the late-Romanticism phase. Consequently, Schönberg was very familiar with Wagner’s opera Tristan und Isolde, a legend that has several points of resemblance with the Valdemar and Tove material. For his part, Maegaard claims that J. P. Jacobsen was less influenced by the Tristan legend. This seems credible, and it led to a parting in the two works on an especially important point, according to Maegaard. Wagner steered his opera in Romantic fashion towards reconciliation and harmony at the end of the work, Maegaard asserts. It is completely different in J. P. Jacobsen:

J. P. Jacobsen’s ending to the story is fundamentally different. Instead of an interpretation within the premises of the narrative, he composes what a later time has called alienation. The premises of the story are denied: it dared to be all lies. Instead of leading the action to harmonious conclusion, he conjures it into the ground and refers it to the ghosts of the night: in the clear light of day, this magic has no power. (Maegaard 1976, 46).
According to Maegaard, this element in Jacobsen’s text had the result of allowing Schönberg to distance the conclusion of the work from the Wagnerian tradition of reconciliation and harmony, something one notices in the part of the work where Schönberg is most Modernistic and future-oriented. This is where he introduces his subsequently very famous “Sprechstimme.” Yet the legacy from Wagner enters with full force afterwards in the harmonizing and pathos-filled ode to the sunrise, in which the composer has had to bring in and make independent a little element from a few short lines of verse in Jacobsen. He provides the story from Jacobsen with a totally new emotional reconciliation that is not found in the Danish poet.

I think that this observation by Maegaard is pertinent and important for understanding the relationship between the two works. Even in its majestic grandeur, there is something trite in Schönberg’s concluding chorus relative to Jacobsen’s more playful intimation that it can all have been a dream. Such a possibility is implied already in the opening poems. Valdemar speaks of “their own river of dreams” and Tove sees the world as “what God has dreamed.”

NARRATIVE ELEMENTS

It is common within psychological research traditions to separate emotions into categories according to, among other factors, the duration of feelings. As mentioned in this book’s introduction, the cognitive psychologist Keith Oatley proposes differentiating between reactive emotions, moods, sentiments and preferences. Reactive emotions are evoked suddenly when something unexpected occurs; something happens that does not have a place in our “assumed world.” Moods last longer, for many hours or several days. Grief or joy can create an atmosphere of feelings about life that are concise, but that do not always have a concrete, obvious cause. Sentiments can exist for many years, and can, for example, determine our relationships to other people for long periods or for a lifetime. Love is an obvious example. Reactive emotions cause a change in commitment, while sentiment designates a continuing involvement. Preferences are a type of feeling defined quite vaguely, and that most essentially resembles a form of personal identity. Patrick Colm Hogan, who clearly is inspired by Oatley, has attempted to shape an affective narratology. He operates with corresponding categories determined by duration, but of a narrative type. He suggests differentiating between incidents, events, episodes and stories. He believes these are found both in literature and in real life. An additional category found in fictional literature, but not in life, is work, that is, the individual literary work of art. The concepts are not directly
equivalent to Oatley’s, but they show a similar approach. What appears to be a general characteristic for Jacobsen and Schönberg’s representations is the use of the middle categories in relation to these concepts. Jacobsen describes moods and sentiments, not so many reactive emotions. With his preference for literary fragments, it is also clear how he avoids telling stories. He prefers to remain on the event or episode level the whole time. This means that he gives great leeway to the reader’s imagination. Not merely from what is told in the portrayed events or episodes, the reader is invited to “see for himself” in his imagination. The reader’s imagination is necessary for it even to be possible to form a story from the depicted fragments; or one has to know the story in advance. Schönberg works in the opposite direction by letting the orchestra weave together the individual songs in a Wagnerian “endless melody,” that is, without a sharp stop between lyric presentations. Moreover, important narrative ellipses are compensated for by Schönberg by means of the orchestra which fills in with an emotional progression where the narrative plot is lacking. This is most clear in connection with the ellipsis where Tove dies. Schönberg fills in with an orchestral interlude that moves from Valdemar’s adoration of Tove (“O wunderliche Tove”) through an emotionally composed symphonic poem towards a finale that resembles an orchestral (death) cry. After that, the grieving “Stimme der Waldtaube” (“The Wood Dove’s Song”) takes over. Alban Berg calls the interlude the execution of the first part of the composition, in which the composer adapts and weaves together motifs from all of the preceding songs.33

These conditions are important for the anchoring of events, among them the connection between emotions and the dissimilar scales of time in the story. As Hogan calls attention to, incidents have a tendency to draw in emotions to almost timeless points. Stories expand the emotional aspects to long-term projects. So the dissimilar techniques with regard to the anchoring of the text cycle’s events and episodes probably have an effect on the imagination’s role in understanding of the two works. Jacobsen’s abrupt technique, where isolated events and episodes are presented as fragments without narrative completion gives, as mentioned, much amplitude for the reader and calls for imagination. In Schönberg, one must, in the same way as with Jacobsen, fill in the narrative ellipses, but emotionally they are to a greater extent completed by means of the music. This gives the emotional progression a continuous dynamic that is not found in Jacobsen, where juxtaposed contrasts dominate.

33. See Berg 1913.
These dissimilar techniques have differing tendencies when it concerns emotional typology. Theorists often operate with two different types of emotional theory: the “perception” theory or the “appraisal” theory of emotion. The first variant places emotions in “small, immediate, spontaneous” contexts; the cognitive aspect is vaguely present. The other variant places emotions in a “large, rational, calculative” context, where the cognitive aspect is more intensely present, and the emotions are to a greater degree influenced by objectives, wishes and overall life projects and goals.

The possibilities for large, interpretive plans guiding our emotional response to events has led many emotion theorists to explain emotion in terms of judgments about the relation between an occurrence or situation on the one hand, and our interests, needs, and desires on the other. At the same time, the possibilities for small, proximate occurrences to excite emotional responses has led other theorists to stress relatively mechanical and automatic processes. (Hogan 2011, 42)

Certainly Hogan does assert that the differences between these variations are not absolute, which seems reasonable. All the same, I think the distinction can in part be used to describe the aesthetic-affective difference between Jacobsen’s and Schönberg’s Gurre-works. Neither of them cultivate the emotionally perceptive incidents that became so popular among Jacobsen’s successors, authors such as Hamsun, Ola Hansson and Sigbjørn Obstfelder. They were all obsessed by the effect of “fractional feelings” on life; they were a type of perception theorists in a sense. But with his fragmentary composition of episodes and events it is not unreasonable to say that Jacobsen has a tendency in this direction. Certainly in Jacobsen it is also a matter of emotions of long duration and of desire that leads to powerful wishes. But he refrains from developing stories to a great extent. He poetically portrays fragmentary emotional moments when events crystallize. Perhaps it was easier for Jacobsen than for Schönberg to choose this solution because he could to a greater extent take it for granted that the public would know the story beforehand. For his part, Schönberg makes use of the same fragmentary texts, but by tying them together in an “endless melody” that counteracts fragmentation, he moves much closer in the direction of producing story. This is mainly reinforced by the use of an orchestral interlude where the ellipses in Jacobsen’s text are several times emotionally completed by musical narration. Schönberg tends in the direction of story, in the direction of an “appraisal theory of emotion.”
In my opinion this distinction makes sense in the debate in literary history about Jacobsen as a naturalist and/or symbolist. Many literary historians place Jacobsen as a Danish naturalist, which is obviously not unreasonable. However, Poul Borum claimed that Jacobsen was a “naturalist in theory and a symbolist in practice” (Borum 1969, 123). His point of view has been followed up by several others since. The influence Jacobsen had outside the borders of Denmark is to a great extent more likely due to his symbolism in practice than to his naturalism in theory. And the sensuality of symbolism very likely tended more in the direction of “the perception theory of emotion” than the cognitively guided “appraisal theory of emotion.”

But Arnold Schönberg’s powerful emotionalism was not symbolic. Schönberg was, both as a late-Romantic and as a dodecaphonic composer, an Expressionist. German Expressionism was much more narrative and dramatic than sensual or marked by immediacy. That Schönberg’s Gurrelieder draws towards expressionistic narrative drama while Jacobsen’s Gurresanger points towards symbolic poetry can therefore be regarded as esthetically significant historically. Among other things it is the narrative treatment of affects that shapes the distinction.

The division between a symbolic tendency and a full-blooded Romantic expressionism can likely also explain several of the other differences between the emotionality in the two works. Jacobsen’s poem is unveiled in a sensual, but restrained, unassuming and melancholy style. The poems are short, with simple syntax and the force of emotional revelation is relatively guarded. The scope is small, whether one thinks about the size of the text or the expressive range. The tone in Jacobsen is fundamentally quiet and sensual. Technically one can notice an evolution through the cycle from traditionally rooted Romanticism with the accompanying rhymed stanzas to a freer discourse marked by metrical complexity and the disappearance of rhyme. In short: from Romanticism to Modernism.

Schönberg’s work is likewise wholly within the transition between late-Romanticism and innovative Modernism. To be sure, the composer keeps within the functional borders of tonality the entire time, but has pushed its principles towards the outer limits of what can be perceived by the ear as tonal music. By extensive use of chromatic scales, modulations and altered chords the work can almost be perceived as de facto twelve-tone music. Schönberg had himself moved bio-

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34. In his book Schoenberg’s Transformation of Musical Language Ethan Haimo has carried out a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between the first draft of a song cycle for song and piano and the completed great achievement. He shows a long series of relationships that all point in the direction of a radicalization of the tonal language. “In actuality Gurrelieder was both a modestly conservative song-cycle and a highly progressive cantata” is Haimo’s conclusion. (Haimo 2009, 65).
graphically and artistically from late-Romanticism to Modernism in the time between the composing and final orchestration of the work. When it was performed for the first time in 1913, it became a late-Romantic success, but Schönberg found it difficult to be pleased about the reception because by this time he had already experienced several fiascos and been berated as an unsuccessful Modernist several times.

And yet the parallelism between Jacobsen and Schönberg with regard to the transition between Romanticism and Modernism cannot hide the striking discrepancy when it is a question of emotional character and power. Schönberg’s Wagnerian lack of inhibition is fundamentally foreign to Jacobsen’s temperament. Even if one can say that both works are situated between Romanticism and Modernism, the basic aesthetic concept is very different in the two artists. Simply put, Schönberg’s work entails ground-breaking prolonging, intensifying and enlarging. Regarding extent, it is possible to easily read Jacobsen’s entire cycle in the time it takes to listen to Schönberg’s orchestra overture, so—before Schönberg has started to tell the story at all. Schönberg takes about two hours to convey his story, and has made an entire long evening’s performance from ten minutes of reading. Because Schönberg has not added any text, this prolonging means that the narration is slow, expanded with affective supplement. The vocal presentation of the text represents a slow reading. In addition, it is lengthened by the orchestral overture, interlude and transitions between the text presentations. The intensifying first and foremost entails an expressive extra stress on all the affects involved. This is physically quite evident. To sing Schönberg’s compositions involves exceptional physical achievement because of dynamics, vocal range and the mastering of intervals. Because of this, Schönberg’s work is considerably different from both a reading out loud or a performative reading of Jacobsen’s text. This is, of course, mainly due to a natural difference in the type of media. Nevertheless: Because Schönberg in the last poem uses a melodramatic Sprechstimme in the performance, it is clearly evident that his entire dramatic and affective thinking is substantially different than Jacobsen’s. No actor would think of presenting Jacobsen’s poem in a way that resembles Schönberg’s Sprechstimme. When it is a question of enlargement generally, I believe that Schönberg’s expressionism represents an aesthetics of hyperbole. This can seem foreign in our time, which is characterized rather by minimalistic tendencies and aversion towards rhetorical high-style. Hyperbolical aesthetics has in many ways today moved into popular culture and subculture, in American cartoons and sit-coms and in hard rock—and also in Karl Ove Knausgård’s prose. On the other hand, there is nothing hyperbolic about Jacobsen’s poetry. It does not exaggerate its affective devices on any points. It is just as sensitive, but it is sensual—never sensational.
CONCLUSION

These analyses have shown that the two artists’ method of story telling are different with respect to composition of narrative elements. Schönberg constructs a three part composition by focusing specifically on Valdemar’s rebellion against God, which he makes into an independent mid-section of the work. Schönberg also makes the last lines in the cycle independent and shapes a majestic, harmonizing ending sequence to the work. On the other hand, Jacobsen appears to work more from a two part conception, where the striking ellipsis around Tove’s death shapes a natural divide. But this is not stressed from the artist’s own point of view. It is clear that the two work differently precisely when it concerns narrative ellipses. While Jacobsen uses them actively as places of fracture where the reader’s imagination takes effect, Schönberg tends to fill up narrative lacunas with musical narration where the listener receives affective guidance for his empathy. In this way we also see that the fundamental elements of affective narrative – incidents, events, episodes and stories – receive somewhat different treatment from the two. Neither seems to focus especially on incidents; it is the mid-categories that are the most important narrative building blocks. Yet with his musical supplementation of narrative ellipses Schönberg tends more in the direction of story-building than Jacobsen, who in his “arabesque” way cultivates fragments. We have also seen that with his expressionism, Schönberg works in an aesthetic regimen that consistently tends towards prolonging, intensifying and enlarging, while Jacobsen with his more symbolistic bearing rather invokes a sensual imagination in his reader. Still, both found themselves between Romanticism and Modernism in the history of aesthetics. They were both exceptional talents in the middle of a period of transition. They were both, in their mid-20s, already mature artists who created lasting masterpieces. But their temperaments were quite different, and this is expressed through their methods of narration and by the ways in which they used affects in their work.
Fractional Feelings in Knut Hamsun’s *Hunger*

Early in Knut Hamsun’s novel *Hunger* [*Sult* 1890] this happens: The novel’s main character walks down the hill from the palace and overtakes two women. He passes them by and barely brushes the arm of one woman. She blushes just then, and the first-person narrator perceives her as being singularly beautiful. He experiences a powerful emotional reaction, which is followed by a surprising whim: he feels an irresistible urge to make the woman afraid. He makes up a name for her, Ylajali, and makes contact with her by telling her that she is losing her book. The woman has no book with her at all and becomes confused. But the narrator does not give in. He makes contact again and repeats the fabrication about the book. The other woman states that he must be drunk, and the two walk on. The narrator follows them all the way until they enter a house. Then he sees her at a window, their eyes meet, and he goes on his way as he feels her eyes following him.

The emotional reactions described in this event appear spontaneous and physical; they are intense and they lead to actions that are difficult to relate causally to the feelings. There is little doubt that the reactions are induced by emotional impulses. In that sense it is a matter of what Keith Oatley would call *reactive emotions*. Oatley describes reaction emotions in this way: “Reactive emotions occur when a concern, a project, an aspiration, has fared either better or worse than we had expected” (Oatley 2004, 10). The element of unexpected change is likely applicable to the episode in *Hunger*, but it is not likely that there was any real project, aspiration or motivation on the part of the main character. The entire episode begins quite accidentally and spontaneously. Oatley does also mention *odd* reactive emotions, but only in the next instance to explain them causally when hidden elements and connections are revealed. Such causal attribution is part of both psychologists’ and literary scholars’ normal activity. Considerable ingenuity and imagination have also been used to explain the *Hunger* hero’s strange feelings and actions. For example, Atle Kittang writes about this scene in his book *Luft, vind, ingenting: Hamsuns desillusjonsromanar frå Sult til Ringen sluttet* (1984) and contributes the following attribution:

By means of the “unheard of” name, he wants to conjure up a beauty that he is left out of and does not own. Language, the conjured name, will remove the
chasm between subject and object. But precisely because it is a “name” and not a “thing,” the magical language itself becomes an affirmation of the chasm, also because it is, in its essence, a private language.

(Kittang 1984, 42).

Personally I think it is difficult to follow the reasoning here, and I frankly believe that some of the fascination of Hunger is precisely because the reader’s causal attribution now and then comes to a halt or appears as quite difficult to accomplish, let alone argue in favor of. It is interesting to see that the attempts in understanding and the difficulties in accomplishing this belong not just to the history of literary reception, but starts in the work itself. The Hunger hero makes an attempt to explain the woman’s reaction: “Suddenly she blushes and becomes wonderfully beautiful, I don’t know why, maybe from a word she’s heard spoken by a passerby, maybe only because of some silent thought of her own. Or could it be because I had touched her arm?” (Hamsun 1998, 11). Then he wants to explain his own reaction: “I was in an irritable mood, annoyed with myself because of the mishap with the pencil and highly stimulated by all the food I had put away on an empty stomach” (ibid.). But it is a matter of tentative assumptions without clear conclusions (“I don’t know why”). Kittang’s contention is that the transition from affect to action is a matter of a change from “beauty” and “consciousness of beauty” to sadism, that is “the conversion of aggression to a sexual urge.” But rather than beauty, could it not just as well concern shyness or embarrassment? To me Kittang’s interpretation appears a little too much like an attribution. We are told that the Ylajali name is a direct result of the tension between sadism and the desire for contact, without the connection being made particularly clear, and the whole thing boils down to desire. From my experience with the text this appears as an example of reading a preconceived explanatory model (psychoanalysis) into the text instead of reading meaning from it. (The Hunger hero’s aggressiveness is not at all tied just to erotic relations.) Personally, I prefer the Hunger hero’s more cautious and experimental suppositions.

A different approach than Oatley’s reactive emotions or Kittang’s psychoanalysis could be Brian Massumi’s conception of affects, where intensity plays a larger role than the qualification of what type of feelings are concerned. Massumi emphasizes the physical and pushes the cognitive aside. Spontaneity and speed are decisive for Massumi. The affects are “unqualified,” they are “irreducibly bodily

and autonomic” (Massumi 2002, 28). He even discusses them as “virtual.” They are of such short duration that they happen “too quickly, actually, to have happened” (30). They will have been recorded by the consciousness, Massumi says, but consciousness is “subtractive and inhibitive.” Both the detachment from a conscious project or motivation and the distinctly physical forms of reaction, in the Hunger hero as well as in the woman, could point towards utilizing Massumi’s affect concept. But, as I have pointed out, with reference to Antonio Damasio for one, such a division between body and consciousness is uncertain. In Hamsun’s text it is also clearly stressed that the little, accidental emotional stimulus that sets the scene in motion leads to both an emotional process and a conscious reflection parallel with reactions and actions: “I was at that moment fully conscious of playing a mad prank, without being able to do anything about it” (Hamsun, 12). Yet what seems “Massumi-ish” is that the reactions above all are characterized by their intensity, something that is perhaps even more striking in a succession of other episodes in the novel. Qualifying the feelings is more problematic. Hamsun himself called them “fractional feelings”: There are fractional feelings, even today, an unconscious, almost uninterpreted additional mental life” (Hamsun 2009, 143). In Hunger he calls them “trivial incidents, miserable trifles” (Hamsun 1998, 16). The point of focusing on these type of feelings is their aspect of undermining or deconstruction. Fractional feelings or trifles sometimes prove to be stronger determinators than conscious choices, values, ideas or perceptions of reality. The phenomenon is perhaps most clearly depicted in Knut Hamsun’s Hunger and in Ola Hansson’s little book Sensitiva amorosa (1887).36

One can safely say the same about Hunger as one can about several of Dostoevsky’s narratives; affects are often the driving force in the epic movement. The changes between different emotions are generally of just as much importance in the story as external events. The changes in mood of the Hunger hero are frequent and they steer his activities. In contrast to the case of Dostoevsky, where ideological interpretations have dominated the history of reception, in the reception of Hunger; it is often precisely emotions, moods and the inner mental life that has been of the most interest. So yet another Hunger reading with the emphasis on affects would probably not bring astounding new insights. Nevertheless, the novel contains depictions of types of affects that should be represented in a reasonably wide discussion of affective narratology. The point here will not be literary historical and developed in the research tradition of New Romanticism or Modernism,

36. Eivind Tjønneland tries to establish a direct contact between Hamsun and Hansson in his article “Sult og ‘Fra det ubevidste Sjæleliv’” in Dingstad, Den Litterære Hamsun. See also Andersen 1992, 328 ff.
nor shall I contribute to the tradition of psychoanalytical research. I wish to stick to the endeavor of scrutinizing the actual relationship between emotion and story.

Right from the beginning the epic plot appears as a series of mood changes in the main character’s mind, initiated by small trivial stimuli. The *Hunger* hero awakens in his room at a boarding house fairly unhappy because of the recent worsening conditions of his life. Still, as soon as he goes outside, the noisy traffic in the street cheers him up and puts him in a good mood. Then he sees an old cripple ahead of him and the feelings shift again. At first he is irritated, then embittered, and so the first strange act is underway. He pawns his vest in order to give the old man a krone. This brings about yet another emotional change. He has fifty öre remaining, and with a prospect for breakfast, he begins to find existence better again. However, the old man will not accept his gift; he probably understands that the benefactor is worse off than he is. The *Hunger* hero feels that his sense of honor has been affronted and once again becomes irritated. Then he has breakfast, calmness descends, and his spirits improve greatly. But indignation strikes again when he discovers that he had forgotten his pencil in the vest that he pawned. And it is on his way back to “uncle” that he meets the two women in the scene we focused upon. In other words: no fewer than seven quick emotional shifts in the course of a few opening pages, and largely induced by trifles.

**FRACTIONAL FEELINGS**

*Hunger* gives many examples of the impact of fractional feelings. Perhaps to some extent one can utilize some of the concepts that Brian Massumi employs to classify especially short, physical affects in his chapter “The Bleed. Where Body Meets Image” from his book cited earlier (Massumi 2002, 46 ff). Here Massumi differentiates between proprioception, exteroception and interoception. These concepts can be included as specifications of what I have earlier called affective sources of stimuli. Proprioception are impulses that come from the body itself, from muscles and ligaments. Primarily it is a matter of the body’s internal sensation of the positions of body parts. Proprioception has been called the sixth sense. Applied to *Hunger*, it would be out of the question to use the concept in a strictly medical sense, but nevertheless it makes good sense to allow for stimuli of fractional feelings that come from the body itself, as opposed to exteroceptive and interoceptive stimuli. Naturally there are many examples of internal bodily impulses in *Hunger*. The very title refers to a physical state that affects the subject on several different levels. It happens time after time in the course of the narrative that the bodily reactions to lack of food places the *Hunger* hero into peculiar affective, physical and sensory states. In the little scene I have chosen to focus upon as
a point of departure, there is also an example of a reference to what one could call proprioception: The Hunger hero is in “an irritable mood” for one thing because he is “highly stimulated by all the food [he] had put away on an empty stomach” (Hamsun, 11). Even if here there is talk of food for once, instead of lack of food, there is no doubt that it is a question of stimuli that come from the body itself.

At any rate, even the initiating stimulus for the scene is what Massumi would call an exteroceptive incident, a tactile little fractional event: “As I walked by I brushed the sleeve of one of them” (11). The Hunger hero is himself aware that perhaps this was the scene’s commencing stimulus, but he also keeps open the possibility that it could have been what Massumi would call an interoceptive impulse, a visceral sensibility: maybe the woman blushes because of “some silent thought of her own” (ibid.). The most discussed occurrence in the scene, the invention of the name Ylajali, also represents such an interoceptive event: “As I stand there looking her straight in the eye, a name I’d never heard before pops into my head, a name with a nervous, gliding sound: Ylajali” (11–12).

All three of these types of stimuli repeat over and over again in Hunger. In a sense, the proprioceptive variant dominates in the sense that it is the phenomenon of hunger that is the main subject of the novel. But the novel is a classic not just because it describes hunger, but because, in addition, it portrays emotional reactions and states of consciousness that are directly as well as indirectly related to the physical phenomenon of hunger. The affective and consciousness aspects of the phenomenon are just as important as the physical.

INTENSITY

The effects of Hamsun’s fractional feelings are astounding. Hunger is a first person novel and the representation is, as Dorrit Cohn has stressed, a paradigmatic example of so-called consonant first-person narration, that is, the perspective of the narrator and the narrating self are very close together.37 There is no correcting authority in the story. This implies that what is first and foremost at issue in Hunger is what I have previously called performative emotionality (see the Dostoevsky analysis). Analytical emotionality is not literally represented in the text, except that the Hunger hero often reflects over his states of consciousness. Still, they do not represent confidence inspiring analytical insight to any great degree. The Hunger hero is in thrall to his emotions, he does not have power over them, neither performatively nor analytically.

37. See Cohn, pp. 155–158 ff.
It appears several times from the reactions of other people that the Hunger hero’s notions are perceived as gibberish. In Hamsun’s novel we can view this activity as a very cautious use of what I have earlier called emotional trigger figures. In the scene I chose to focus on, this first appears in the confusion of the woman, then by her friend’s repudiation and characteristic: “he’s drunk. Can’t you see the man is drunk!” (Hamsun, 13). The same thing happens in other scenes, whether it involves beggars, people he encounters by chance on a park bench or patrolling policemen who react. The Hunger hero appears as more or less insane. The hero himself realizes that he clearly makes a suspicious impression on others, and reflects on it: “The man was still keeping an eye on me, maybe I had somehow aroused his suspicion; standing or walking, I felt his suspicious glance following me, and I didn’t like being persecuted by this individual” (139). The aberrations can come about in several ways, but a general characteristic is the intensity of the emotional outburst, often in the form of anger or rage. Several of the Hunger hero’s outbursts of rage are reminiscent of what I have called free floating emotions in connection with Dostoevsky’s Dmitri. The difference is that the Hunger hero does not resort to violence, as Dmitri does, for example with the staff captain. Independent of the nature of the feeling, it is a matter of a loss of control, as with Dmitri. Feelings and strange whimsies take possession of him, and he cannot manage to stop himself, even in instances where he knows he is heading for disaster.

The most intensive scene of rage follows directly after an intense physical experience of hunger, and the aggressiveness is not directed towards another person, but towards God or fate. The Hunger hero has just been so down and out that he has sought out a butcher and asked for a bone for his dog. He gnaws on it, but the few shreds of meat left on the bone just cause him to vomit. He tries to force the pieces down, but his stomach refuses to tolerate them. He then is overcome with weeping and wrath.

Since it avails me nothing however hard I try, I fling the bone at the gate, bursting with impotent hatred and carried away with rage, and shout fierce threats up at the heavens, screaming God’s name hoarsely and savagely and crooking my fingers like claws… (136)

An uncompromising revolt against God follows. He yells and screams curses towards heaven, all alone in a narrow passage, and his entire body is exhausted from the emotional outburst:
Quivering with rage and exhaustion, I keep on standing in the same place, still whispering oaths and insults, catching my breath after my fit of crying, broken and limp after my insane explosion of anger. I stood there maybe for half an hour, gasping and whispering while holding on to the gate. (137)38

Often the uncontrolled outbursts of feelings and whims lead the Hunger hero to act in a directly self undermining way. Many scenes have the character of absurdity. One could perhaps say that some of these reactions appear to function in a similar way as those which Joseph LeDoux has called “low road” reactions, that is, rapid signals are sent that bypass consciousness. But it is certainly not a matter of reactions that can give the same historical evolutionary explanation as, for example, fear/flight reactions. If the forms of reaction are similar, they still nonetheless have differing explanations.

**SUSPENSION**

An effort in characterizing the special emotional states can in my opinion be tied to three main concepts: suspension, super sensitivity, and script-skipping. Suspension here means an emotional state where normal competencies are suspended temporarily. It can concern competence that the ego has intact under normal circumstances, that is, when fractional feelings do not take over. It can happen that several normal competencies are suspended at the same time. Most striking is the betrayal of social competence. This appears in meetings with other people and is attached textually especially to dialogues. The Hunger hero’s behavior towards the two women in the focalized scene is typical. A fractional feeling arouses an irresistible urge in him to make a random woman afraid. He is fully conscious that it is a matter of an insane sudden impulse, but still begins his “malicious” game. He behaves in a socially unacceptable fashion and so is also perceived as being a drunk. It does not seem as though the women become particularly afraid. They look at him with a “half-scared, half-curious glance” (13). The fright is evidently projected unto the women by the Hunger hero: “even the buttons on her dress seem to stare at me, like a row of terrified eyes” (13). In fact, the Hunger hero is surprised that she doesn’t become afraid: “Why didn’t she call for help? Why didn’t she push one of those flowerpots over on my head or send someone down to chase me away?” (14).

38. The Lyngstad translation contains changes and additions added in subsequent editions. This quotation omits one sentence in the Lyngstad translation to conform with the first edition.
Even earlier in the novel we have seen how social competence fails in the meeting with a random beggar in the city. Despite the plight he finds himself in, the *Hunger* hero is not able to refuse a random beggar. He initiates an entire project in order to procure money. In this case it is also clear that even self-interest and instinct of self-preservation are suspended as a result of the impulses of fractional feelings. In the case of the beggar, it is plain to see a value that is at risk for the hero of *Hunger*, a wounded sense of honor. This seems to be more important than the need for food. Still, it is not honor or shame that provokes the episode. The triggering factor is a fractional feeling, an irritation at the sight of the beggar: “In the end I was getting increasingly irritated by having this decrepit creature in front of me all the time” (7). That the hero of *Hunger* actually is in possession of social competency when fractional feelings do not set it aside he shows by the pretense he is able to accomplish confronted with police officers when he spends the night as homeless. He manages to convince the officer that he is a journalist with *Morgenbladet*, a daily newspaper, who has merely locked himself out, and not just a common pauper. Unfortunately, the ruse means that he will not get a meal ticket in the morning. But things often go wrong. For example, he seeks out a street vendor to whom he had earlier given alms, and suddenly demands the wares he paid for a long time ago. When she has difficulty understanding what he means, and when she will not comply with his demands, he acts in a bullying and threatening manner, and coerces her to give him some cakes. It is no wonder that she perceives him as insane. His behavior in the fourth section is even more striking, when he more or less refuses to be evicted from a lodging where he stopped paying rent several weeks earlier. He even goes back, occupies, and begins writing in his former room after having been duly thrown out. This audaciously grasping behavior in the situation seems particularly peculiar because here it appears that the otherwise almost instinctive reaction to loss of honor suddenly looks like it is out of the running. All of a sudden he seems entirely without shame.

The suspension of basic needs, the instinct for self-preservation, self-interest and social competence are among the most peculiar characteristics of the *Hunger* hero. Now and then it can seem as if the sense of time also is suspended, without causing equally conspicuous consequences as the other suspended competencies mentioned. It is often small, incidental emotional stimuli that cause the suspensions: the aforementioned proprioceptions, interoceptions or exteroceptions.
SUPER SENSITIVITY

Another effect of fractional feelings is super sensitivity. This emerges in the focus scene in the following way:

However estranged I was from myself in that moment, so completely at the mercy of invisible influences, nothing that was taking place around me escaped my perception. A big brown dog ran across the street, toward the Students’ Promenade and down to the amusement park; it had a narrow collar of German silver. Father up the street a window was opened on the second floor and a maid, her sleeves rolled up, leaned out and began to clean the panes on the outside. Nothing escaped my attention, I was lucid and self-possessed; everything rushed in upon me with a brilliant distinctness, as if an intense light had suddenly sprung up around me. (13)

In this scene super sensitivity is portrayed as a part of the influence of fractional feelings. At other times, the phenomenon is directly tied together with the physical effects of hunger, for example, in the beginning of the third section:

…the nervousness refused to go away. During the day I sat and wrote with my hands swathed in rags, merely because I couldn’t stand my own breath on them. When Jens Olai slammed the stable door downstairs or a dog entered the back yard and started barking, I felt as though pierced to the quick by cold stabs of pain which hit me everywhere. I was fairly done for. (99).

SCRIPT-SKIPPING

“All at once my thoughts, by a fanciful whim, take an odd direction – I’m seized by a strange desire to frighten this lady…” (11). This is the Hunger hero’s reaction after having seen a “wonderfully beautiful” total stranger on the street. And he does not hold himself back. The impulse leads to action, and he begins his bewildering nuisance performance. The transition from the perception of beauty and fascination to malicious impulse appears enigmatic, and that the unpredictable whim also leads to applied action does not make the scene less bizarre. As I have pointed out several times before, there are some automated “low road” reactions that control the connection between certain emotional stimuli and actions (fear/flight). Most common are conscious and cognitively controlled patterns for the relationship between emotions and actions. The psychologist Silvan Tomkins
developed a script theory of narrative patterns or sequences of actions that often repeat in people’s lives. Many scripts are widespread and have their origin in cultural conventions. But there also exist individual life-scripts that are formed in people’s lives, and that can be mobilized by definite emotional stimuli. Individuals act based on such life-scripts to solve certain emotional problems, Tomkins believed. Nevertheless, both malicious impulses and the bothering of strangers on the street seem a highly unusual sequence of actions after a fascinating experience with feminine beauty. As a script, it is neither culturally or individually directly meaningful. The need for attention can, of course, in certain contexts lead to negative or destructive behavior. But in this case, it is not a question of a repudiated need for attention that is compensated for by negative attention. The sequence of actions appear both narratively and psychologically enigmatic. I choose to call the phenomenon script-skipping. Causal attribution comes to a halt. The creation of meaning is cut off. There exists no obvious comprehensible connection between the elements in the sequence. It appears more like a short series with clean jerks from one to the other. One could use deep and clever efforts in order to find hidden emotional problems that the Hunger hero possibly seeks to solve by means of this script-skipping. A different way of relating to the enigma is precisely to hold on to the senselessness in the sequence. As is well-known, it is not so long after Hamsun’s *Hunger* that a movement within literature emerges in which the exact main point is to portray and stick to absurd sequences both literarily, psychologically and existentially.

*Hunger* is hardly a work of absurdist literature even if there are instances where causal attribution comes to a halt, and narrative sequences appear rather as absurd script-skips than meaningful life-scripts. There are namely a good many instances of events in which social competence is suspended, and where these instances of mad conduct can more easily be understood precisely as expressions of individual life-scripts. This concerns especially many episodes where rage and loss of control is caused by the triggering of the *Hunger* hero’s deeply wounded sense of honor. The urge to compensate for social disgrace and debased feelings of honor is psychologically comprehensible, even if it leads to results that rather increase the loss of honor than restore honor lost. The behavior is self-undermining and contributes to make life worse for the most part. But as a life-script in the existence of the debased person, it is psychologically understandable. The *Hunger* hero’s urge to give alms to others, even when he has nothing to give, is unreasonable, but it is not so difficult to understand the psychological mechanism. The urge to belittle others is understandable from the same principle of wounded self-assertiveness. Nevertheless in *Hunger* there exist such psychologically explicable individ-
ual *life-scripts* side by side with what I have chosen to call *script-skipping*. Another example of *script-skipping* in *Hunger* is the scene in which the hero spends the night in a police cell. He is seized with an intense fear of the dark: “My nervous state had gotten out of hand, and however hard I tried to fight it, it was no use. A prey to the quirkiest fantasies, there I sat…”(65). He imagines for example, that the darkness must be “a special kind of darkness, a desperate element which no one had previously been aware of” (ibid.). He finds a hole in the wall, and is convinced that it is a special and mysterious hole. But then the following happens: In the midst of the peculiar fear of darkness scene, he suddenly snaps his fingers, and the mood shifts. He has invented a new word, Kuboå. The change of mood is totally without transition. Once again it is a matter of a *skip*. He is suddenly lying on the bunk, chuckling, and deliberating over all the meanings such a new word could have. However, he cannot reach an agreement with himself about the meaning of the word, and then the mood shifts once again. Anxiety returns, he feels feverish and begins to fantasize. “My madness was a delirium of weakness and exhaustion, but I was not out of my senses” (68). He fears for his reason, jumps out of bed, staggers to the door and tries to open it. “I…bang my head against the wall, groan aloud, bite my fingers, sob and curse…” (ibid.). Especially the first reversal, tied to the word kuboå, is depicted as a spontaneous and unexplained *skip*.

**EMOTIONAL SPACE**

The conception of emotional space plays an important role in *Hunger*, as it does in Dostoevsky.

The opening sentence is famous in Norwegian literary history: “It was in those days when I wandered about hungry in Kristiania, that strange city which no one leaves before it has set its mark upon him” (3). The marks that the city sets on someone can no doubt here be both physical and mental. But no matter what, it is evident that the city itself is perceived as a special space with its distinctive effect on people. After this short and general introduction, the entire remainder of the novel, with its description of emotions, affects and social conditions, can be understood as specifying what characterizes this distinctive space, the city Kristiania. Atle Kittang makes a very pertinent observation about the relationship between the city and the “I” character in *Hunger*: “In a remarkable contrast to the diffuse and anonymous “I” of the text, stands the topographical accuracy in some of the descriptions of the city” (Kittang 1984, 37). He interprets this relationship in the following way:
On the one hand the text contains a completed world, permanently cast with its streets, buildings and names. But the main character is closed off from this world; he only notices it as a stream of details, precise, but without depth and temporal precision. (ibid.)

Quite a few places within the city space are portrayed in *Hunger*, and movements from one space to another often accompanies an affective change. It is sufficient to mention the very first shift of scene. When the *Hunger* hero awakens in his “attic,” he is in a bad mood. But that changes as soon as he gets out on the street and hears voices and the rumble of wheels. In this instance, it seems as if the shift of space is at least partially the reason for the emotional reversal. We can very well talk about emotional rooms.

The different rented rooms and lodgings share the common characteristic that seldom does the hero of *Hunger* feel at ease inside by himself. Still, the changes in rooms and lodging signal above all social decline and increasing misery. This spatial degradation is most clear when he has to move out of his room and obtains temporary residence in the owner’s own apartment. Family life here is certainly not in keeping with any established social standard. The decline is underscored in that the *Hunger* hero now seems to have lost his usual powerful urge to maintain his feeling of honor. There is also a clear connection between space and emotion in the cell where the hero sleeps one night, and where he is seized by fear and feelings of madness when darkness falls.

There is no doubt that Hamsun uses different literary spaces in his composition of *Hunger*. To a certain extent this geographical composition can be tied explicitly to emotions or affects. However, in some cases literary spaces are used rather to organize elements and motifs of the text such as, for example, social status, poverty and the like.

I shall not undertake any systematic analysis of affective space in *Hunger*. But it is quite clear that Hamsun organizes with both macro-geographies (Kristiania) and micro-geographies (rented rooms, streets, parks, etc.) in the novel. Analytically, I shall be satisfied with returning to the wandering in the street that has functioned as the focus scene in this chapter. The walk goes down Palace Hill, to the corner by University Street, where the pedestrians turn up towards St. Olaf Place. By Cisler’s Music Store they stop, turn and go back the same way they had come. Then the expedition ends as the two women go into “number 2, a big four-story building.” There is nothing sensational about this rambling seen externally, other than, as Kittang has pointed out, that it is described with topographical precision, marked by “the conscientious naming of streets, businesses and buildings”
(Kittang 1984, 37). What I want to direct attention to is the rhythm that is established in the text by means of a simple, but conspicuous device. The *Hunger* hero and the two women pass by each other no fewer than eight times in the relatively short walk. Whenever they pass each other, it is clearly indicated in the text (except for one time when the hero must have passed the women without it being specified in the text). These repeated scene instructions do not just shape a literary rhythm; they are also tied to a story of an emotional progression where affects change several times in correlation with their passing of each other. It must be a matter of quite short-lived affects since they change so many times in a short period of time. If they are not so brief that they “happen too quickly to have happened,” it is at any rate the case that the topographically precise scene of the walk also represents a complete rendition of an entire affective repertoire of rapidly changeable affects in the *Hunger* hero.

I don’t think it is a matter of a random numerical system of composition from Hamsun’s point of view, nor just about a pattern of repetition. I think it also concerns a coupling between body and affect, more explicitly stated between the position of the body and affect. There is a big difference between standing face to face with someone, and being observed from the back. Likewise, it is quite different for one to observe someone from the back, and to be observed from the back oneself. No one has, when all is said and done, seen themselves full length from the back. It is an insecure, vulnerable position that gives little feeling of control. If one can follow after somebody oneself, and can observe them from the back without being observed oneself, then one has a much greater degree of control of the situation, and is oneself less vulnerable.

There are some interesting reflections about such “axes of vision” in the aforementioned Brian Massumi chapter (Massumi 2002, 48 ff). The ordinary picture we have of ourselves is a type of “mirror-vision,” according to Massumi. In a mirror it is difficult to see ourselves from the back, and it is hard to see ourselves making normal movements. We can at the most see individual body parts move, the arms, head and so forth, but not the entire body in normal movement. Film is required in order for us to see ourselves from the back or with normal movements. Only on film is it possible for us to achieve “a seeing of oneself as others see one” (47). And appropriately, the point of departure for Massumi’s chapter are the reflections of a movie actor, namely Ronald Reagan’s autobiography (!).

When you observe someone from the back, the other object is in your own “axis of vision,” you have the position of the subject. With others’ eyes in your back, you are the object of others’ “axis of sight,” you have lost the position of subject. Others look at you, and they see something you yourself are not able to perceive.
One is forced to imagine “a seeing of oneself as others see one.” For someone suffering a weak social or mental situation, it would be challenging to endure the gaze of such “seeing of oneself as others see one.” That this is really valid for the hero of *Hunger* is clearly confirmed in the final phase of the focal scene. He imagines that “Ylajali” is standing looking at him from the window as he moves away from the spot:

In all likelihood she was at this moment closely following every movement of mine, and it was absolutely unbearable to know that you were being scrutinized like that from behind. I pulled myself together as best I could and walked on; my legs began twitching and my walk became unsteady just because I purposely tried to make it graceful. In order to seem calm and indifferent I waved my arms absurdly, spat at the ground and cocked my nose in the air, but it was no use. I constantly felt those pursuing eyes on my neck and a chill went through my body. At last I took refuge in a side street… (Hamsun 1998, 14).

Even early in the focal scene it is clear how the shift in the “axis of vision” implicates affective change. The first time the *Hunger* hero passes by “Ylajali” the “strangeness” that provokes the powerful experience of beauty occurs. It apparently happens spontaneously and is not planned. The emotional reaction is so strong that for a moment he is not able to walk further, but must stop to collect his thoughts. Then she passes him. With this passing the most astounding affective reversal occurs: He feels an desire to make her afraid. He himself says his “malice” increases. He takes advantage of the subject position where she is the object of his “axis of vision.” He comes from the back, overtakes her and turns around abruptly towards her with his bullying fabrication: “Miss, you’re losing your book” (12).

So when in the next instance he has her eyes in his back, the affective situation changes completely. As he finds himself in the object position and is left to imagine “a seeing of [himself] as others see [him],” he suddenly feels shame: “Strolling on thus at a slow pace, always with a few steps’ lead, I could feel her eyes on my back and instinctively ducked with shame at having pestered her” (12). Still, he takes care to recapture the subject position by repeating his attack from the rear. Once again the affective situation changes emphatically: “I gloat cruelly over her confusion, the bewilderment in her eyes gives me a thrill” (ibid.). Then, just as the women turn by St. Olaf Place, the affective situation also turns irrevocably. From now on, the *Hunger* hero is no more on the offensive, the aggressiveness is gone, and he sees himself “as others see [him]” even as he now slinks behind them:
All the while I followed as hard upon their heels as I dared. They turned around once, giving me a half-scared, half-curious glance; I didn’t perceive any resentment in their looks nor any knitted brows. This patience with my harassment made me feel very ashamed, and I lowered my eyes. I didn’t want to pester them anymore – I would follow them with my eyes out of sheer gratitude, not lose sight of them until they entered somewhere and disappeared. (13)

In my opinion this review has shown that the first meeting with “Ylajali” first and foremost displays a self who is characterized by rapidly shifting fractional feelings. I can hardly see that the scene in any way shows a clear sadistic desire, as Kittang claims. Fluctuating between self-assertion and shame is a clearer signal from the text, and is in agreement with other episodes in the novel. Perhaps this discussion also shows that rapid and constant changeability is a better description of the Hunger hero’s affective pattern than ambivalence. An interesting feature in the analysis in my opinion is that the affect reversals seem to be in accordance with shifts in the “axis of vision.” This is not a traditional narratological category à la point of view. The point of view does not change. It is the subject himself who shifts between seeing himself as the subject of his own actions, and seeing “[him]self as others see [him].” The episode shows a subject who is in a weak position at the outset. It takes a considerable irritable mood, aggressiveness and madness for him to dare to assume the subject position, and the position is thereby tied to the suspension of social normality. It takes almost nothing for him to switch over to the object position – and the object position also in his own eyes. Such a status is linked to shame for the hero of Hunger. When one rejects oneself in one’s own eyes, one feels shame. In the analyzed focal scene Hamsun depicted these relationships by a simple positioning of bodies in an emotional space.

CONCLUSION

Hunger is a novel that, similar to Doestoevsky’s The Brothers Karamazov, has its epic driving force in emotionality to a great extent. The emotions of the “I” character are often just as important as outer events when it is a question of moving the narrative forward. One of the reasons that it was important to have a novel like Hunger included in this examination of affective narratology, is the types of affects that impel the actions in this case. That is, the small, spontaneous and apparently insignificant affects, trifles or fractional feelings, as Hamsun calls them. They are able to take power and control from the self. This kind of affect must be included in attempting to establish a repertoire of emotions, affects and
forms of reaction that have meaning for an affective narratology. It is a question of affects that have a potentially undermining function in relationship to norms, values and cognitive choices that we ordinarily view as having basic importance in our individual lives. Fractional feelings can deconstruct the connection between trifles and what we perceive as the most important things in our lives.

One of the reasons that the affects can have such impact is likely because they impact with their intensity more than with their specific content. Such a connection between intensity and content is reminiscent of points of view found in the theorist Brian Massumi. For this reason I have let myself be inspired by his classifications: proprioception, exteroception and interoception. Applied to a fictional text such as *Hunger*, the concepts should hardly be perceived in any strictly medical sense. Still, the division itself gives meaning relative to *Hunger*. There are examples here of intense affects that come from within the body, from tactile stimuli and from the inner life of the consciousness. Perhaps it would also be appropriate to include stimuli from the other senses, especially the visual, and from dreams and hallucinations. However, such stimuli are less specific for *Hunger.*

I have attempted to describe the effects of fractional feelings by means of three main concepts that say something about meaning both for the depiction of character and for the narrative plot. The affects result in the suspension of normal competencies, at least temporarily. They implicate loss of control over feelings, performances and actions. They also bring a special form of potentiated ability to pay attention, a super sensitivity for details in the surroundings and a lowered tolerance threshold for sensory stimuli, both tactile and auditory. What has the most direct effect on the narrative level is what I call script-skipping, that is sequences of events that are, and often remain, enigmatic; a course of events that apparently do not have meaning either from culturally conventional scripts or from meaningful life-scripts.

The analysis of Hamsun’s *Hunger* also shows that in an affective narratology, one probably should have attention directed towards the position of bodies in emotionally coded spaces, and alterations in the space. The question of “axes of vision” or changes in “axes of vision” can also find a place in the affective narratology repertoire of concepts. For individuals caught in the play of fractional feelings, such changes could have a direct meaning for affects and for actions that propel the narrative forward.

I believe these phenomena can have a certain transfer value to other texts, and that they therefore should be included in a repertoire of phenomena one can direct attention to in connection with analyses of affective narratology.
Social norms are decisive for our emotional life, writes Martha Nussbaum in *Upheavals of Thought*. Her point is that social norms vary, and that culturally specific values therefore influence what we feel. Nussbaum asserts, for example, that “...a culture that values honor highly, and attaches a strong negative value to the slighting of honor, will have many occasions for anger that an equality focused culture ... will not have” (Nussbaum 2001, 157). Nussbaum’s example of a culture without anger is the Micronesian Ifaluk culture in the Pacific Ocean. According to Nussbaum, anger among the Ifaluk is associated with shame. At the other end of the scale one could place the old Norse culture. It is well established knowledge that Old Norse society was to a high degree a culture of honor, and that the duty to and readiness to defend honor was among the most important values in these societies. The ability to be aroused to rage and the courage to convert it to violence were among the foremost qualities people could have. At least that is what Old Norse literature tells us.

Julian Pitt-Rivers, one of the pioneers in modern research into honor, calls attention to three facets in his definition of honor: “a sentiment, a manifestation of this sentiment in conduct, and the evaluation of this conduct by others...” (Pitt-Rivers 1968, 503). This definition has been emphasized as *communis opinio* within the sociological research tradition (Patterson 1982, 79). All the same, it is usual within this field of research to expand further upon primarily two aspects, external and internal honor. External honor deals with one’s good name and reputation, one’s esteem, prestige, position and value in others’ eyes. Internal honor is more or less identical to personal integrity or character, and consists of venerable human characteristics that produce basic self-respect. This division is what Frank Henderson Stewart calls “the bipartite theory [of honor]” (Stewart 1994, 19). The distinction is found among many researchers in slightly different variants. For example, Stewart places great emphasis on Moritz Liepman who, at the beginning of the twentieth century, was occupied with defamation in the German judicial system. Perhaps it is this judicial context that has caused Stewart to view the emotional side of Pitt-River’s definition as unmanageable. It is easy to understand...
that a subjectively felt defamation would not be adequate for conviction in a modern judicial society. Nevertheless, it is evident from most depictions that honor is closely tied to affect and emotion, even if it is not directly regarded as an emotion. Stewart even has a chapter in his book entitled “The Sense of Honor” (italics mine). And as we have already seen, honor is also often closely tied to other affects, anger, for example. Many, such as David D. Gilmore, also see honor almost as a counterpart to shame. In all likelihood, Stewart’s effort to tone down the affective aspect is primarily a manifestation of the general discomfort of being occupied with feelings in the context of research. But to consider honor without taking the feeling of honor into consideration would seem almost absurd.

The “bipartite” theory still makes sense as far as it goes. Stewart found the two-part theory as early as in Liepmann who used the concepts “objectified honor” and “subjectified honor.” Robert L. Oprisko takes the division for granted, and establishes the main outline of his presentation in two sections: “External honor” and “Internal honor.”

Honor, rage and shame are probably not universal affects, but are tied to social norms as Nussbaum asserted. Honor and a sense of honor are attached to honor groups that individuals belong to or identify with. Disparate honor groups can have different honor codes, and the groups can be far-reaching (for example cultural groups) or smaller, or more specific (for example occupational groups or similar). There are also sub-groups within larger societal communities where specific and deviant codes of honor are practiced (for example criminal circles within a law-abiding society).

From its Greek and Roman heritage, western culture is an old honor culture. “Homer’s highest good is not the enjoyment of a quiet conscience, but the enjoyment of timê, public esteem” writes E. R. Dodds in The Greeks and the Irra-

39. James Bowman, who treats honor historically, also works with “The Two Kinds of Honor,” but for him it appears to concern, on the one side, conceptions of honor that he believes are universal, and on the other side, culturally specific conceptions of honor. Bowman calls the universal conceptions of honor “reflexive honor” and the culturally specific ones “cultural honor.” “Reflexive honor” is a rather unfortunately chosen designation, since it is also used by Stewart, but there with an entirely different meaning. With Stewart, “reflexive honor” is the term for the phenomenon that within certain (honor) groups, every challenge to honor can be potentially undermining, that is, everyone must at all times be ready to defend his honor — even if the challenge should be unwarranted or even laughable. (Stewart gives the following example: At the beginning of the twentieth century a general in the Austro-Hungarian army had to show up for a duel if he was challenged by an subordinate private even if the challenge was due to a trifle. If not, the general’s honor would be impugned.)

tional (Dodds 1951, 17–18). Still, today the culture of honor is considerably weakened in the West, and not least in Northern Europe. Several researchers mention this deterioration, among them Stewart and Bowman. But they call attention to different factors that have contributed to the weakening. Stewart points out that subjectivism has occurred in the course of history; increasingly, development privileged personal qualities as a basis for a sense of honor, mentioned as “the integrity position” (Stewart 1994, 51). In addition, James Bowman points out that the two world wars discredited established concepts of honor in the western world, something that is reflected in war literature and in the cultural climate after the wars. The late-modern welfare state is an equality oriented and [human] rights-based society, where hero worship and honor play a lesser role. Actually there are many examples that prior dishonorable or embarrassing characteristics and events can create a basis for fame and interest. What appears beyond a doubt is that the cultural meeting between cultures of honor and cultures that have a weakened code of honor emerges as one of our times’ most incendiary areas of conflict. Thus, there is every reason to place a focus on honor and the weakening of a culture of honor in our own society.

In this chapter I will examine the weakening of the culture of honor particularly in a Norwegian context. I will do that by means of some chosen historical moments. I will take my point of departure in Old Norse culture, and use *Egil Skallagrimsson’s Saga* as an example of an extreme culture of honor in our past. Then I will scrutinize the changes that the two world wars represented in the western world. Finally I will dwell on contemporary culture, and use Karl Ove Knausgård’s *My Struggle* as an example of the anti-honor culture of late modernity.

I. OLD NORSE CULTURE OF HONOR

Scandinavian society has traveled the long path from a quite extreme culture of honor to a culture that cultivates equality to a greater extent than most other modern societies. As a reminder of our cultural roots I will tell the sweet childhood story about Egil Skallagrimsson playing ball in *Egils Saga Skallagrimssonar*. It was said about Egil that as a seven year old he took part in a ball game together with other children, among them a ten year-old named Grim. Egil lost to Grim in a test of strength. Egil lost his temper and hit Grim with a bat. But Grim was bigger. He lifted Egil up and threw him to the ground. Egil could not tolerate this. He sought out an adult and borrowed an axe. “Egil ran up to Grim and drove the axe into his head, right through to the brain” (*Egil’s Saga* 1997, 77). Egil was not taken in hand by child protection services. … But the murder led to hostilities that ended with seven men killed in battle. His father, old Skallagrim, didn’t like what had happe-
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ned, but Bera, Egil’s mother, said that “he had the makings of a true Viking and would clearly be put in command of warships when he was old enough” (ibid.). Subsequently there is just more of the same. Much more. The modern reader has to remind himself that this is not a story about a problem child, but a tale about a hero. An excess of wrath, a violent temper and hypersensitivity to loss of honor sets the precedence for celebrity in Old Norse culture. The sense of honor and readiness for rage were so prominent that it could make any situation into a life-threatening incident. Outside of “play,” in social life, the sense of honor and offences to honor were driving forces that set the gravest events in motion. The events followed fixed scripts: a sense of honor – defamation – rage – violence/revenge – retaliation – re-retaliation (a spiral of violence). On home ground the Scandinavian societies cultivated excessive rage and a volition for violence as the highest guarantor of honor. As a by-product of this domestic policy focus, a general culture of violence sprang forth that made Viking raids and harrying a part of the European politics of the age. The well-off Scandinavians of that time did not make a killing in the stock market. They went on Viking raids for a couple of summers, slaughtering people and stealing their property.

In Old Norse culture honor was more important than life itself. Of foremost importance was a good reputation after death and in order to obtain that, there was merit in dying an honorable death. In his book Fortælling og ære. Studier i islændingesagaerne (1993), Preben Meulengracht Sørensen writes that “in the Icelandic sagas, honor and the shape of society are two sides of the same matter” (Sørensen 1993, 187). However in the research literature, social esteem, as mentioned, is only one aspect of the concept of honor. External honor corresponds to internal honor. The internal aspect concerns personal integrity, a more individualized concept of honor that deals with noble traits of character. James Bowman believes that one finds the embryonic development of such an inner concept of honor as early as in the culture of the Greeks. The same tendency can be found in Old Norse culture. Christian culture took over the concepts of honor later on. The honor of the clan was replaced by the honor of God.

The connection between outer and inner interpretations of honor have been variable throughout history. Two of the most well-known representations of Western cultures of honor, the culture of Chivalry and the Victorian Christian Code of Honor, appear as variants in which both inner and outer aspects play an important role. One can generally say that the culture of honor continued, but the honor was to God on high. And yet, a considerable amount of honor trickled down through the ecclesiastical hierarchy also. Popes and priests took possession of property and fortune by other methods than those of the Vikings, but if one inspects the mani-
festations of “God’s” honor round about in the Cathedrals of Europe, it appears that their methods were just as effective as the raids of the Vikings.

Even if you take into account the Christian influence on an old honor culture in this way, it is important to remember that a phenomenon such as dueling, where men settled offences to their honor at the risk of their lives, continued in Europe throughout most of the nineteenth century and in some cases even into the twentieth. Side by side with the Christian culture’s notions of humility and forgiveness, the primitive dueling culture survived and progressed through hundreds of years. A clear change slowly takes place within what one can call the history of modernity. The anti-hero appears, especially in the literary tradition of Rabelais and Cervantes. Already here one finds a nascent undermining of the Western culture of honor. At the beginning of the modern breakthrough, this evolution hastens. Especially in Ibsen one can see a strong heroism put to the test and to a large extent being undermined by ambivalence and criticism.

The World Wars

The Western honor culture undergoes a powerful, perhaps final weakening in the first half of the twentieth century. In his book *Honor: A History* (2006), James Bowman writes a comprehensive section about “The Decline and Fall of Western Honor Culture 1914–1975.” In this interpretation the two world wars play a decisive role. As Bowman depicts it, the way in which modern warfare was waged contributed to ending the old honor culture in the Western world. In this context it is relevant to see the two world wars in relation to each other. A development that began in WWI was completed because of WWII. There were only twenty years between them, and WWII can in several respects be considered as a continuation of WWI, with an eye to the concept of honor included. In any case, on the German side it was partly a matter of restoring lost honor after the defeat in WWI. Perhaps in Scandinavia there is also a special reason to see the two world wars in continuity. We acquired direct war experiences of waging modern warfare only in 1940, but by then the entire century’s changing experience was included, with overdue force.

With the mobilization in 1914, there was actual enthusiasm for war in Europe, and most drew to the front with the thought of winning a quick and honorable victory for their home superpower. Patriotism and the concept of honor very likely preserved their position on the political level, among military superior officers and in propaganda for the civilian population. But it was different on the battlefield. Life at the front had a hand in undermining the fighting spirit and concept of honor. The background was the long-lasting trench warfare that no one was able
to win. The undermining of every conception of honorable battle and proud victory was the result, in the first place, of the number of fallen and maimed; but just as important was the anonymizing and industrializing of the acts of war, and the role that sheer chance played in the life-and-death struggle. In *The Social History of the Machine Gun* John Ellis writes,

> If a machine gun could wipe out a whole battalion of men in three minutes, where was the relevance of the old concepts of heroism, glory and fair play between gentlemen? … In a war in which death was dealt out to so many with such mechanical casualness how could the old traditional modes of thought survive? (Ellis 1986, 142).

In addition to the machine gun and mortars there was another new technique of war, namely gas attacks, where one attempted to annihilate entire areas all in one. In retrospect they are regarded as a forerunner for so-called “carpet bombing.” Trench warfare was purely a war of cannon fodder. With a “no-man’s land” between them, many hundreds of thousands of young men lived and died submerged in narrow muddy trenches that extended over large parts of Europe. In a succession of onslaughts, the soldiers were ordered out of the trenches, into no-man’s land to run into the enemies’ shower of bullets and die. The attacking side could win a few worthless kilometers of earth full of slippery mud and corpses. Then they had to dig themselves in again after a loss of thousands of men in each wave of attack. The attackers always had twice as many casualties as the defenders. After the day’s battle, the wounded were left lying in no-man’s land to slowly die. No one could go out and get them. The survivors who were to face the rain of bullets the next day could try to sleep to the screams of pain from their comrades whom they had shared their water rations with the night before. The soldiers were fighting a war there was no use in winning. Many of those who survived the trenches came home as the living dead. Before they arrived at the front they had learned about patriotism, heroic battle and honorable struggles. But they fought in a battle where nothing they had learned had any meaning. Soon something remarkable happened. A new type of wounded began coming home from the front; not just the large numbers of physically wounded, but young men who did not function as human beings any longer. At first there was the attempt to conceal the phenomenon. They were called cowardly, these silent, apathetic and empty-eyed youth who only a short time before had been the brave champions for the future of the fatherland. They risked being executed for desertion. But little by little one had to realize that they actually were wounded soldiers. The injuries were called shell shock.
The effects of modern warfare are documented by the so-called “war poets,” among others Wilfred Owen, who was killed in 1918, and Siegfried Sassoon, who survived. Later a succession of novels were published about experiences on the battlefield; for example, Erich Maria Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front* and Ernest Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms*. In Hemingway we find these famous words: “There were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity … Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages…” (Hemingway 2003, 185). But it wasn’t only abstract values that lost their meaning. The very understanding of humanity had to be transformed. The essential image of humanity built on strength, pride, honor and courage fell away to the advantage of a new psychological, therapeutic image of humanity, where trauma was stronger than the sense of honor or courage. This is excellently described by Pat Barker in the biographical novel *Regeneration Trilogy* (1991–1995) where we meet both of the “war poets” Owen and Sassoon, among others, in therapeutic treatment behind the front lines in the care of the Freudian psychiatrist, Dr. Rivers.

Despite the excessive losses of human life during WWI, there was great disparity between the war experiences of the soldiers and the civilian population. To a large extent the civilians were influenced by propaganda, while the actual experiences at the front made the rhetoric of propaganda obscene, as Hemingway said. This was probably one of the reasons for the “taciturnity” the soldiers brought back from the front, such as Walter Benjamin portrays it in his essay, “The storyteller.” So too in Remarque’s novel *All Quiet on the Western Front*, where the impossibility of getting [experiences] across to family and friends when home on leave is described. Paradoxically, men would long to return to the war, because there they were together with comrades who knew what it was like. One of the evolving features that can be seen from WWI to WWII is that the civilian population became more involved in the active actions of the war to a greater extent. The movement was from a “world war” to a “total war.” This also had meaning for the fall of honor. From the outset there was a big difference in what one could call the warring parties’ moral capital in WWII. Nazism appeared as a racially based honor culture without morality. The Holocaust confirmed this to a fault. The Allies had an indisputable moral advantage. When the war was over, this advantage felt fairly securely intact. But there were dishonorable acts of war on a large scale on both sides, and in the post-war period these slowly but surely came to be known publically. What was new in WWII compared to the first world war was especially the extensive use of air forces. The Royal Air Force, which defended England with its fighter pilots, clearly emerged as heroes with great honor. But
already the first day at the helm, Winston Churchill supported large scale bombing of enemy territory. Some of this bombing was obviously directed towards military targets such as armament factories and transport systems. The bombers had enormous striking power but poor accuracy, especially because they often bombed at night. In such raids one could consider civilian losses as a kind of consequential error. But gradually the civilian population also became bombing targets for massive air raids. In 1939 the British had agreed that the RAF would not bomb targets on German soil and not ships lying in port. But after the Germans bombed Rotterdam on May 14, 1940, the bombing of cities became an accepted act of war, and it was practiced by both sides during the war. In his book about honor, Bowman writes about the bombing of cities under the heading “Area Bombing and the Demise of Honor Culture” (Bowman 2006, 169 ff). After the war the Germans’ bombing of Rotterdam, London and other English cities and the Allies’ bombing of Dresden, together with the annihilation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki stand as the most large-scale examples of carpet bombing of civilians. Through these actions, western civilization has proven itself dishonorable. What Bowman calls cultural honor, is, so to say, depleted.

“Det er ingen hverdag mer” [Everyday life is dead and gone]
Jeg vil hjem til menneskene (I want to go home to the humans) is the title of the first collection of poetry from perhaps the most eminent author that debuted in Norway directly after the war, Gunvor Hofmo. Even this early title reveals most about the importance of the human factor in her life experiences. She is away from home, and the only home she is yearning for is that of humanity. This feeling of a lost humanity followed Hofmo her entire life, and characterized both her poetry and her state of health. The immediate background was the Holocaust. Hofmo had a Jewish friend and probable lover, Ruth Maier, who came to Norway as a refugee in 1939. But together with 532 other Jews she was deported from Oslo the 26th of November 1942 in the cargo ship Donau. She was led directly to the gas chamber at Auschwitz five days later, the 1st of December 1942. She was twenty-two years old. Her diary has been published in both Norwegian and English, and she has been called the Norwegian Anne Frank (Ruth Maier’s Diary: A Young Girl’s Life under Nazism, 2009). A large portion of Hofmo’s authorship is directly or indirectly influenced by the inhumanity of the war, so in this sense it can be viewed as a form of witness literature. In her most well-known poem, she describes existence as a permanent state of emergency. The poem is called “Det er ingen hverdag mer” [Everyday life is dead and gone]:
God, if you are still watching:
Everyday life is dead and gone.

There are only silent screams,
There are only black corpses

Hanging in red trees!
Hear how quiet it is.

We turn to go home
But we hear them always.

All we sense each day
Are the breaths of the dead!

If we walk in forgetfulness
We tread on their ashes.

God, if you are still watching:
Everyday life is dead and gone. 41

This is probably as close as we come to a “Zero Hour” experience in Norwegian postwar literature, such as we know it from Heinrich Böll’s and Günter Grass’ Group 47 in Germany. The immediate impact of the war on Norwegian writers was major in many other cases also. Jens Bjørneboe, who débuted in the 1950s, wrote about this experience (with an autobiographical background) in his novel Stillheten (1973) [The Silence, 2000]:

Then there’s something else, which keeps popping up. It happened thirty-eight years ago, and changed my whole life. I was fifteen years old at the time, and it was all because of a book. I read it through in one day; it wasn’t that long. It was a thin book with contents of a descriptive sort; and even though I had been quite depressed in the previous fourteen years as well, still I can say that since reading this book I’ve never been happy again, or only for brief moments at a

41. Few of Hofmo’s poems have been translated to English. The translations in this chapter make no attempt at replicating Hofmo’s use of rhyme or meter since the meaning would be compromised. The “everyday” of the title refers to the normal weekday. She is stating that a normal day no longer exists.
time….It may be the most important book I’ve ever read, and it put an end to my childhood.

(Bjørneboe 2000, 164)

The book discussed was Wolfgang Langhof’s account from the German concentration camp Sachsenhausen, *The Peat Bog Soldiers*.

Both Hofmo and Bjørneboe depict the effects of the war in the form of affective reactions. Bjørneboe stresses depression and joylessness; Hofmo places most emphasis on grief, anxiety, despair and loneliness. The two were of the same generation; Hofmo was born in 1921, Bjørneboe in 1920. The war flooded over them with a shock in their youth. They were eighteen and nineteen when the war broke out; Hofmo was in the midst of a vulnerable time of youth when Ruth Maier was deported and executed. She felt that it was humanity itself that had abandoned the world. She was “on the other side,” in “another reality,” as she writes in one of her most well-known poems. But, more than that. Hofmo had possessed a Christian worldview. Now she turned against both believers and against God, and she did that in the only religious genre where there is a place for rebellion and accusations against God, in the *threnody*, the lament.42 Large portions of Hofmo’s authorship can be perceived as *threnodies*. Like the composers Arnold Schönberg and Krzysztof Penderecki, Hofmo shaped a new, modernistic variant of the *threnody*, an old genre known from both Biblical and Jewish tradition. Hofmo does not just take aim at a human world without purity and without honor, but against the very worship of honor that had distinguished our culture since the introduction of Christianity. Gunvor Hofmo takes aim at God’s honor. She complains to a God who is without shame. In the poem “Vi som er viet” [We who are wed] from the collection *Fra en annen virkelighet* (1948) [From Another Reality] she refers to God as “a God who sleeps at night while the earth rips apart,/ a God without purity, without shame.” In “Blinde nattergaler” [Blind Nightingales] from the collection of the same name (1951), she expresses herself even more crassly:

But not the barbarian’s hand
and not the barbarian’s desire
demands us, demands blood
crushes a cross of our spirit!

42. See Andersen 2007.
You, God, are the one who has
poked our eye out,
you are the pain that blends
with the wholeness we once were.

So Hofmo doesn’t just turn against a world where humanity has lost its honor. She
is part of the dismantling of a thousand year-old honor culture in the religious
mold, the Christian devotion to the honor of God. She is left with a shameless God
and a world she cannot endure.

The Therapeutic Image of Humanity

Sigurd Hoel was born in 1890. He published *Meeting at the Milestone* in 1947
when he was fifty-seven years old. He was among those who introduced psychoana-
lysis to Norway. He was saddled with an old explanatory model from the first
half of the century, and he used it zealously and systematically. It was already
known from the shell shock victims of WWI that an understanding of men based
on heroic and honorable personal characteristics was not adequate to explain the
nature of human reactions in war. This had become persistent societal knowledge
ever since the days of the war. Psychoanalysis was ready to rationalize the new
knowledge. The conception of a complex non-essentialist self that contained forces
it did not itself have control over fit very well in explaining and treating these new
human forms of reaction. As described by Pat Barker in *Regeneration*, this is pre-
cisely what happened with the shell shocked wounded at Craiglockhart Hospital.
Dr. William Rivers was the representative of psychoanalysis. Those admitted were
no longer executed as cowardly deserters; they were placed in conversation therapy
and received anti-depressants. The image of a therapeutical humanity took over
from honor. Sigurd Hoel’s entire book is an effort to transfer the psychoanalytical
“talking cure” to the genre of the novel. In this case it is more a matter of a didactic
analysis than a cure. The first person narrator begins with wanting to understand
how ordinary people in Norwegian society could become Nazis. He had several of
them in his circle of acquaintances and he refers to a time when it was decisive to
know who was friend and who was foe. There was a clear dividing line between
“good Norwegians” and “traitors,” those who had their good name and reputation
intact and those who had forfeited their honor. At the outset, the narrator is known
by the nickname “The Spotless One.” But the book’s analysis leads to the same
insights that I have already mentioned with respect to the general history of the war.
It is stated early in the analysis: “It is not easy to win with dignity.”
Have we learnt enough? Have we experienced enough, thought enough, felt enough, understood enough – or shall we in winning lose the dignity which we have acquired while we were weak, oppressed and trampled upon?
(Hoel 1951, 32).

In a word, the analysis shows that The Spotless One is guilty. He does not win with his decency and honor intact. Because of a complicated love affair in his youth, it comes to light that The Spotless One is himself the father of Nazism, literally. The most fanatical Nazi among the Norwegians is his own flesh and blood son, who desires to take his life. Perhaps something rather commonplace in Hoel’s portrayal is that behind the treason lies a betrayal of love. And behind this betrayal of love lies the treachery of the old against the young, the old men’s treachery. Despite possible thematic banality, Hoel’s vote is clear: The Spotless One is guilty. Honor is lost. The human being does not consist of essential and honorable qualities. He is complex, and lacks both control and perspective over his own actions. Even the ordinary, common person is under the magnifying glass of suspicion. We are living after the essential individual. We are living after honor.

The Black Bird
An important characteristic of most honor cultures is that they appear as pronouncedly male cultures. Nini Roll Anker’s Kvinnen og den svarte fuglen (1945) [The Woman and the Black Bird]43 can represent the feminist aspect of Western honor culture’s deterioration in the time after the war. Perhaps this aspect is among the most striking traits in the development of the entire era. I shall not assert what is cause and what is effect here. And of course on this point one can also make delicate distinctions by pointing out that “feminism” had been in the spotlight in the Scandinavian societies at least since the 1870s. But that was also precisely the time Ibsen started his ambivalent undermining of masculine heroism.

Nini Roll Anker was born in 1873. She died during the war in 1942, at seventy-nine years of age. Her novel Kvinnen og den svarte fuglen was published posthumously in 1945. She belonged to an upper class stratum in Norwegian society but was herself a socialist, pacifist and feminist, something that characterizes her novel ideologically. She was not among the most radical feminists of her generation, but she was certainly among the most zealous pacifists. In Kvinnen og den svarte fuglen we encounter Bett, mother of three, two boys and a girl. She is mar-

43. This novel has not been translated to English.
ried to Just who works in “Iron and Steel” and produces weapons. Both sons are called up for military duty as soldiers. Hans returns blind and maimed for life. “He was not human any longer … a figure without hands, without anything in the arms of the jacket. A head without a face” (Anker 1945, 182–83). Otto becomes a deserter. He cannot participate any longer, and his mother helps him to get away. They are captured, and the text is written by Bett in prison while Otto is waiting for his punishment as a deserter. Just is the bearer of the typical masculine culture, in the novel depicted as unimaginative, non-flexible and rigid, an admirer of “Iron and Steel” in several senses, of large muscles and swelling chests. He is proud of his sons who are fighting bravely in the war, his “honor group” is nationalistic and he is insensitive to losses on the enemy’s side. He gets into quarrels with his sister-in-law and his daughter who operate with completely different “honor groups.” They stand for the idea of a working class general strike against war, and the notion that the mothers of the world could end all war when they finally become sufficiently enlightened and realize their potential power. There are many ideological layers in the novel. For my context here, it is most important to illustrate that the deterioration of honor culture clears the way for, or happens parallel to, a new growth of female influence. After the weakening of honor culture in western society there is a new focus directed towards equality and human rights questions, and equal rights for women and men is a part of this development.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in 1948, and underscores the transition to a global philosophy of political equal rights. Shifts in histories of ideas and ideologies such as these are naturally complex. But nevertheless there cannot be any doubt that there is a connection between the deterioration of honor culture in Western societies and the weakening of patriarchal hegemony, something that Bowman discusses in his book (Bowman 2006, 117 ff). This has created a new cultural situation, not least in the Scandinavian societies, where women play a very different and more prominent role than in most honor cultures.

I believe that the weakening of the old honor culture and the transition to an equality based and human rights culture are among the most important changes in Western society. They took place slowly and through time, but the world wars probably played an important role in the process of change, and the establishment of a global network of human rights in 1948 demonstrates that something decisive had happened, at least as far as it concerns the nation as “honor group.” This does not mean that any one of us does not have an individual sense of honor. There is also no doubt that honor culture survives within definite “honor groups,” also in the western world. Especially in criminal gang environments, strict honor codes still rule. In particular areas of competition there are also still elements of honor.
culture with specific honor codes, for example in sports, artistic or our own academic environments. But the western welfare society does not converge around a concept of honor as the culture’s central code of values. Society’s fundamental, clear value system is equal rights, equal rights to communal public assets.

II. KARL OVE KNAUSGÅRD: MY STRUGGLE
The Late-Modern Welfare State
Consequently, there is good reason to believe that traditional honor cultures in the western world were weakened and changed character in a continuous evolution from the outbreak of modernity and forward to the two world wars. Experiences in the wars represented in their turn an undeniable undermining of what one could call cultural honor. Societies moved in the direction of values based on rights and ideals of equality, that is, equality as principle. Cultural values formulated in legal language, and with intended global validity, could be presumed to be less affectively dependent. They should be able to be asserted and invoked independently of national and cultural feelings that had proven to be so catastrophic in both world wars.

In this time of late modernity, traditional conceptions of honor seem to play a quite subordinate role as culture-carrying and politically controlling incentives in the West.44 Actually, there are many examples, especially in art and cultural life, of a type of anti-honor culture, a cultivation of and building of celebrity by means of phenomena that traditionally would have been perceived as damaging to personal honor. The most obvious examples would be the use of the painful and embarrassing as a basic element in comic art forms. It is sufficient to mention Rowan Atkinson’s success with “Mr. Bean” or Rolf Wesenlund with his “Fleksnes” TV series.45 We saw an extreme exploitation of this phenomenon in Sasha Baron Cohen’s film “Borat.” The paradoxical connection between honor and the dishonorable was accentuated in this case when the film, which is heavily based on embarrassing episodes and shameless or dishonorable and offensive conduct, won a Golden Globe award in 2007, and was nominated for several other highly esteemed prizes. When the late modern Western societies and the Muslim honor

44. One must nevertheless still be somewhat cautious in generalizing on this point. During the big political conflict of the Greek financial crisis, it was noticeable that the top Greek politicians again and again argued from the sense that the honor of the Greeks had been accosted.
45. “Fleksnes” was a very popular Scandinavian sitcom, based on the British series “Hancock’s Half Hour.”
culture time and again come into conflict about caricature art, we should not dis-regard the fact that the Western appreciation of the dishonorable in humor plays an important role in the cultural antagonism. The struggles about caricature are perhaps an example of the collision between an intact honor culture and a comic art form “after honor.”

But the representation of the traditionally embarrassing or painful and dishonorable is not only found in cartoons and comic art. The Norwegian Prime Min-ister Kjell Magne Bondevik scored considerable bipartisan support by being open about his mental health issue, depression. This example draws attention to an important aspect of the function of the embarrassing or painful and potentially dishonorable in late modernity. In serious, as opposed to comic, contexts they function as an indicator for honesty and authenticity, and those are traits that a person in late modernity considers more valuable than traditional honorable personal characteristics. The courage to reveal oneself is seen as more valuable than traditional daring in battle or other situations requiring great deeds. Shame-ridden phenomena that earlier would have caused shame no longer necessarily do so, but in some cases quite the opposite, respect. Openness surrounding earlier topics of shame can be one of several gains from the weakening of honor culture, be it mental problems, bullying, sexual tendencies or the like. The appreciation for bringing private relationships and concerns into the public sphere is a part of this development, and has clearly contributed to changes in attitudes and greater tolerance. In the last few years this development has been conveyed to newer levels both in traditional and new media such as blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr etc.

But revealing one’s own life also leads involuntarily to the revealing of the lives of others. We live in social relationships. The characterization “ruthless” has become a positive description in connection with self revelation, but accompanying problems have been thrown into relief from both ethical and legal quarters. It is perhaps easy to agree that everyone has the ownership rights to his own life story. But most people can see that one treads onto problematic grounds when a person carries out “ruthless” public exposure of information about others, who themselves do not wish the exposure and who often can be defenseless with respect to it (for example, children or the deceased), or who dispute its truth content. In such cases, one deprives the ownership rights of another to his life story. Moreover, the sociologist Richard Sennett has pointed out greater societal problems tied to what he calls The Fall of Public Man or “The tyrannies of intimacy,” that is, the phenomenon that the public sphere more and more functions on the premises of the sphere of intimacy (Sennett 1974, 337).
My Struggle

Scarcely any cultural phenomenon in the last few years has actualized these aspects of the changes in honor culture to a higher degree than the publication of Karl Ove Knausgård’s *Min Kamp I–VI [My Struggle I–VI]*. Knausgård has won greater prestige more quickly than any other participant in public life based to a large extent on his “ruthless” revelation of relationships that belong to the intimate sphere, and that would traditionally be perceived as both publically irrelevant, partly painful or embarrassing and even quite ignominious. If we deem literary prizes as a badge of “honor,” we can very well say that Knausgård has won considerable honor within a particular honor group precisely by breaking with fundamental traditional honor codes. While the collected reception of the work has shown that this relationship takes place in an affective sphere, the work itself is also quite affective in its method of narration, something that, among others, Eivind Tjønneland has called attention to with his formulation of what he perceives as *Knausgård-koden* [The Knausgård code] (Tjønneland 2010). Knausgård himself writes in *My Struggle II* that the only reason he wanted to write was to be able to express feelings. This is what he says after a powerful musical experience causes him to start crying:

My feelings soared and before I knew what was happening my eyes were moist. It was only then that I realized how little I normally felt, how numb I had become. When I was eighteen I was full of such feelings all the time, the world seemed more intense and that was why I wanted to write, it was the sole reason, I wanted to touch something that music touched. The human voice’s lament and sorrow, joy and delight, I wanted to evoke everything the world had bestowed upon us.

(Knausgård 2013, 345–46)

In his book, *Honor: A Phenomenology*, Robert L. Oprisko points out that it is appropriate to distinguish between shame and dishonor in connection with the rupture of honor culture: “Shame is a fact of life. The society will have expectations for each member based upon their identities and their past actions” (Oprisko 2012, 73). He also stresses that “prestige is gained through excelling. Shame is avoided by not failing” (71). Unni Wikan thinks that it is common in honor cultures to be more concerned with avoiding shame than with obtaining honor. This assertion is cited and discussed by both Stewart and Oprisko (ibid.). In the late modern Western variant we encounter in Knausgård, this fear and sensitivity to
individual shame appears to be strongly weakened or altered. This is explicitly mentioned in *My Struggle II*: “I don’t give a shit about myself” as an answer to his friend Geir’s commentary on self exposure. What shocked Geir in the reading of Knausgård’s first novel *Ute av verden* [Out of the World] was “the fact that you went so far, put so much of yourself into it” (Knausgård 2013, 166). In this case it concerns a crime, a punishable sexual act committed against a thirteen year old girl – an act that Knausgård in *My Struggle II* certainly does what he can to cast a mystifying veil over. At any rate, he feels no shame. He “doesn’t give a shit” in connection with exposure of painful or dishonorable actions, he claims. An obvious example of this is the description of premature ejaculation in connection with sexual encounters with women. Neither does his own unfaithfulness towards women he is involved with make him uncomfortable. The same is true of unfaithfulness where he himself is cuckolded. In line with statistical knowledge of life in late modernity such occurrences appear rather more commonplace than dishonorable. He also talks about drunkenness, wild behavior, acts of vandalism, failure and stupidity during his time in Bergen, for example, apparently without a need to conceal what is painful or embarrassing. As far as it goes, he seems sensitive to his own failures, but not affected by embarrassment or shame. He is ostensibly indifferent to expectations that society might have for him, and the form of prestige that one gains through “excelling.” *My Struggle* depicts both a recklessly revealing person and a type of shameless person.

Certainly on this point a delicate distinction is needed. It is not the case that the Knausgård whom we encounter in *My Struggle* never feels shame. On the contrary. He is prone to feeling insignificant in relation to others. The most dramatic episode of shame is probably the grave self-inflicted injury he inflicts upon himself at an author’s seminar on Biskops-Arnø. After being rejected by a woman (the woman who later became his wife), he cuts up his own face with a piece of broken glass. (A corresponding episode is found in *My Struggle V.*) When he meets the other authors (including the repudiating Linda) the next day, there is no doubt that he feels shame. As he does in other situations as well. He can feel intense shame but he is not ashamed of that. The point is that shame never causes him to conceal himself or go into hiding. Here it is appropriate to be reminded of the psychologist Erik Erikson’s classic description of “autonomy versus shame and doubt” in his major work *Childhood and Society* from 1963:

> Shame is an emotion insufficiently studied, because in our civilization it is so early and easily absorbed by guilt. Shame supposes that one is completely exposed and conscious of being looked at: in one word, self-conscious. One is
visible and not ready to be visible; which is why we dream of shame as a situation in which we are stared at in a condition of incomplete dress, in night attire, “with one’s pants down.” Shame is early expressed in an impulse to bury one’s face, or to sink, right then and there, into the ground. But this, I think, is essentially rage turned against the self. He who is ashamed would like to force the world not to look at him, not to notice his exposure. He would like to destroy the eyes of the world. Instead he must wish for his own invisibility. 


As is evident, Knausgård’s *My Struggle* involves a gigantic initiative that consistently moves in the opposite direction from Erikson’s description of shame. Knausgård displays it. He talks exhaustively about it. The Knausgård that we encounter outside the work *My Struggle* even appears to make shame a type of psychological basic mode of his life. The issue is that every time he writes what he is ashamed to have written, his editor says he is writing his best, according to the writer himself. He refers to it as his “shame-o-meter” (Knausgård 2013b, 3). It is not the case that shame is something foreign to him. The brazenness consists in that he narrates intimately about it, that he “[doesn’t] give a shit” and believes from the editor’s statement that he scores artistic points for it. To be sure, the critic Ane Farsethås also believes that the editor is right: “It is when he descends the lowest, and humiliates himself as much as possible, that the literary self arises to the greatest heights” (Farsethås 2012, 305–06).

As opposed to shame, dishonor is, according to Oprisko, directed not at oneself but at an honor group: “Dishonor differs from shame … because it actively engages the values of a group to dismiss it” (Oprisko 2012, 69). It is likely in this sphere that *My Struggle* has emerged as most controversial in its public reception. If we recapitulate for a moment some of the elements from the old honor culture we came from, it seems undoubtable that the honor group we have the foremost obligations to is the family or clan, then in-laws and those with whom we have family ties. Those who have protested most vehemently against Knausgård’s project are precisely his family and the “clan” he comes from. In a letter to the editor in *Klassekampen* on the 3rd of October, 2009, several family members wrote: “We are talking about confessional literature and factual prose. Judas literature. It is a book full of insinuations, lies, incorrect characterizations of people and disclosures that quite clearly break Norwegian law in this domain.” This conflict between Knausgård and his kin is perhaps the clearest example of how far late-modern values have moved from the traditional honor culture. Knausgård does not
only disperse disgrace on his father and grandmother’s family, he also exposes his own lovers, his nuclear family and his own children. Thus he breaks with the traditional society’s primary honor groups. In *My Struggle VI* he touches upon what this has cost the one closest to him, his wife Linda. Even a positively inclined critic like Jon Helt Haarder takes a skeptical attitude towards Knausgård’s discussion of his own children: “With his confessions Knausgård places not just himself, but also those closest to him in the hands of his readers. Something that, especially in connection with the children, is risky, if not reprehensible” (Haarder 2014, 203).

Knausgård’s project exemplifies the clear deterioration of the traditional honor culture, especially by showing an apparent indifference to one’s own shame and a corresponding disloyalty to traditional honor groups. Knausgård himself often stresses his need for solitude. He claims that he would prefer to be alone; he wants to be free. He is dependent on having time alone. But Knausgård is not at all alone. On the one hand, he does write himself free from community and honor groups he does not want to belong to. But at the same time he is writing himself into new honor groups, late-modern honor groups that are not based on family and kinship, but on “fame.” Late modernity’s primary honor groups are based on prestige, excellence, fame and celebrity or star status:

Prestige is the conception of honor that positively affects an individual’s hierarchical social value in a group. Prestige is the process whereby external groups grant honor to a member for achieving or displaying excellence in deeds and attributes considered *good* by said group. (Oprisko 2012, 63).

This is Oprisko’s definition of prestige, and he asserts that the concept corresponds to Stewart’s term “vertical honor.” “…vertical (or positive) honor [is] the right to special respect enjoyed by those who are superior,…” writes Stewart (Stewart 1994, 59). He lists a long series of characteristics or qualities that can be the basis for such respect, but ends his litany by saying “or anything else.” Oprisko also concludes: “A person can get honored for anything as long as it is of value to and considered virtuous by the honor-bestowing sovereign” (Oprisko 2012, 63). So it should not surprise anyone that one can obtain “vertical honor” based on phenomena that *outside of* a specific honor group (authors) traditionally would be considered as covered in shame and disgrace. W. L. Sessions in his book *Honor for Us: A Philosophical Analysis, Interpretation and Defense* (2010) distinguishes between, among others, conferred honor, recognition honor and positional honor. In the case of Knausgård, initially it is a matter of recognition honor, which according to Sessions ranks the highest. There is nevertheless no doubt that this
creates a basis for positional honor in the next instance. Knausgård’s work My Struggle I–VI has won him a position as perhaps Norway’s most famous writer, at home and abroad. By this I do not mean to claim that it was just the break with traditional honor codes that has earned Knausgård recognition honor. Many have called attention to the aesthetic and artistic merit of My Struggle. My point, in the context in which I place My Struggle, is that the break with traditional honor culture has not made Knausgård dishonorable. Quite the contrary. It demonstrates the weakened honor culture of our time.

It is also fitting to remark that Knausgård obviously pokes into a real and bitter family conflict. My point is not in any way to take a position on the matter in dispute. For all I know, Knausgård as well as his kin can have their legitimate concerns. My focus is the symptomatic in the relationship between the individual and a traditional honor group and its honor code. It should also be added that, of course, family conflicts have followed the history of literature throughout time. What is special in Knausgård’s case is that it is a question of an actual, known family in a recognizable local environment – not this or that literary Oedipus or a staged Doll House.

As an autobiographical text, My Struggle therefore accomplishes what autobiographies are in the habit of doing. The work projects and constitutes a self. Autobiographies are not neutral accounts of a life lived. They also create what they write about, that is, a self that the author or writer can identify with and live with. In Knausgård’s case it is clearly evident, as mentioned, that in that process there are several communities that he wants to write himself out of, especially traditional honor groups – and some communities that he wants to write himself into, especially the community of authors. As a consequence of succeeding so well at this, “for achieving or displaying excellence” he also achieves being taken up in the late-modern media society’s special honor group, the celebrity or star status group. Such honor groups are distinguished to a large degree by late modernity’s general “fluid” nature. The celebrity’s star lights up the sky for a while, but can often be extinguished after a time. Late-modern communities rarely hold guarantees of durability. They are also to a much lesser degree marked by loyalty than traditional fellowships were. Inner competition is more conspicuous than solidarity and equality. There is competition for the attention of the media and the public, and those are limited, as is well known. Seen in this light, this type of prestige is similar to what Stewart calls competitive honor (Stewart 1994, 59ff). One does not gain attention by being loyal and adapting oneself to established social codes. One gains attention by forcing open established borders, breaking with recognized codes, also recognized honor codes. Here is where Knausgård’s ruthlessness has its effect. Knausgård himself reflects over this ruthlessness that causes him to break with accepted decency:
One of the questions this book gave rise to for me when I wrote it is what there is to gain by transgressing the social, by describing what no one wants described, that is, the secret and the hidden. Expressed in another way: what value does ruthlessness have … its consequences do not only affect me, but also others. At the same time, it is true. To write it, one must be free, and to be free one must be ruthless. (Knausgård 2011, 970, *my trans.*)

Knausgård writes for his freedom, not for fame. That is definitely an artistic fact. But the social fact is maximum prestige in the honor group in this cultural arena. The first fact takes place in the text; the other fact takes place in public – both the ignominy that he casts over traditional honor groups and the inclusion in the late-modern honor group of celebrities. As little as *My Struggle* can be regarded from a text internal perspective (with its ambiguous status as novel and autobiography); just as less can the reception of the work be regarded as a purely aesthetic judgement of quality. The text is a performative speech act. It creates a celebrity, a prominent member of a late-modern honor group. And it disgraces traditional honor groups.

It is evident in the work that the author himself reflects on honor. His conceptions of honor are, quite surprisingly, strikingly old-fashioned, almost Old Norse. It is also obvious that he sees – and regrets – the weakening that the traditional honor culture has experienced in late modernity. We find Knausgård’s fascination for elements from traditional honor culture in his interest in boxing, the boxing environment, and his friend Geir. The boxing environment is precisely a special honor group where it is a matter of quite simple, traditional honor codes that distinguish it from the rest of society – but that can perhaps be reminiscent of values from way back in Egil Skallagrímnson’s time. Knausgård puts the blame on the society of the welfare state when it concerns the weakening of these values:

He [Geir] had boxed at a club in Stockholm for three years in order to gain a firsthand view of the milieu he described [in the book *The Aesthetics of a Broken Nose*]. There the values that the welfare state had otherwise subverted, such as masculinity, honor, violence and pain, were upheld, and the interest for me lay in how different society looked when viewed from that angle, with the set of values they had retained. (Knausgård 2013, 126)

What Knausgård touches on here is precisely how different society appears when one contemplates it through the eyes of a different community or the codes of dif-

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46. This quotation is from Book VI of *My Struggle*, which has not yet appeared in English translation.
ferent honor cultures. He himself represents precisely the characteristic welfare state’s late modern “fluid” values. The group that has accused him of writing “Judas literature,” represents – parallel to the boxing environment – another honor group with a different honor code.

In toto, Karl Ove Knausgård’s *My Struggle* reveals the status of the honor culture and concepts of honor in late-modern, Western society. An almost total emancipation from traditional honor groups is possible. It is not just possible but even highly esteemed to rid oneself of traditional honor codes as well, including widespread ethical norms. In line with developments in other fields in late-modern society, belonging to honor groups and loyalty to honor codes are topics for choice and re-choice (what Anthony Giddens calls *second choices*). At the same time, both the work itself and its reception show that traditional feelings of honor are still found as residual values in society. The exposure of traditional honor groups evokes frustration, anger and despair, even illness reactions, in these same honor groups; but, of course, without mobilization of the judicial system to take a position against honor infringement (even if lawsuits are threatened). It is perhaps somewhat surprising that the “emancipated” one also shows frustration in connection with the deterioration of the honor culture. This frustration is expressed especially in the relationship of the feminist sides of the lost honor culture. As mentioned, most honor cultures are very much dominated by males. Late-modern Western society, which is heading towards equality, shakes the honor culture’s traditional male role. *My Struggle* shows considerable frustration in connection with late-modern gender identity, something that especially emerges in the context of parental roles. But Knausgård also shows interest in the values of traditional, masculine honor culture in connection with his admiration for the boxing environment. Therefore he turns against the same late-modern welfare state society that has made it possible for him to be emancipated from traditional honor groups and honor codes.

47. The relationship between honor and law is a wide-ranging subject. Stewart has a separate chapter about it in his book. He shows that in countries where there has been a close connection between honor and law, the number of litigations about insults to honor have greatly decreased, which underscores the weakening of honor cultures. (At the beginning of the 1900s there were 50,000 cases per year in Germany. In the 1960s this was reduced to between 8000 and 10,000. See Stewart 14). In addition, Stewart cites Montaigne who wrote that “there are two sets of laws, those of honor and those of justice, in many matters quite opposed” (cited in Stewart 79). Montaigne also said that “He who appeals to the laws to get satisfaction for an offence to his honor, dishonors himself” (Stewart 80). It is clearly a common feature in the history of honor that such a discrepancy between the judicial system and the honor culture has existed. In European history this meant, for example, that one turned a blind eye to a dueling tradition that actually was illegal — in the same way as other honor cultures have continued to take lightly phenomena such as so-called murders of honor, for example.
Conclusion

In many ways I believe that the weakening of the honor culture generally is a great liberation. It does have some bizarre consequences for those of us who cannot tolerate the embarrassing or painful. But on the whole it makes it easier to imagine a positive transition to a cosmopolitan society of equal rights. At the same time it is probably a fact that the cultural encounters between strong honor cultures and weakened or liquidated honor cultures are among the greatest challenges of our time. In 2003 Unni Wikan, a Norwegian anthropologist who is referred to in almost all international research on honor and honor cultures, published *For ærens skyld* [In Honor of Fadime], a book about the honor killing of the young woman Fadime in Sweden. She writes:

Honor-based violence and honor killings may have come to stay in the new multi-cultural Europe. But lives can be saved and needless suffering avoided if we come to understand better what “honor” is all about and how it can be given a new meaning and used to further humane values. (Wikan 2008, 4)

I think myself that many of our contemporary challenges lie here, rather than in encounters between religions. Unni Wikan cites the Danish-Syrian politician Naser Khader in her book, and he appears to support this viewpoint:

For many traditionalist Muslims, honor and shame are at least as important parts of everyday life as is Islam. More than religion, *it is the unwritten rules of honor and shame* which perpetuate cultural differences between men and women, the gender-divide, the veiling of women, the significance ascribed to virginity and so on. The entrenchment of honor and shame creates more problems for integration in Denmark than the religion Islam, which in many ways is a pragmatic religion. (Khader 2002. Cited in Wikan, 65).

Therefore, I think it is important for considerably more research on this topic, including research on the development that has made concepts of honor foreign to a degree for many in the late-modern welfare-state society. And more political and cultural dialogue is needed.
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AFFECTIVE NARRATOLOGY. CONCLUSION.

All normal people have feelings. Perhaps we have feelings all the time, even if the intensity varies greatly. In order to understand ourselves and others, it is decisive for us to perceive, interpret and respond to our own feelings and those of others. The centuries-long tradition of attempting to make emotion and reason into antagonists, implicitly to marginalize feelings, entails an abstraction that can only be successful as long as feelings are of mild or average intensity. One could also say something similar about the attempt to establish sharp divisions between body and consciousness. The brain is a part of the body that communicates with the rest of it. To abstract the cognitively adapted emotions from the affects of the body can only have limited interest.

Only living organisms have affects, emotions or feelings. Letters of the alphabet, words, sentences and paper do not have them. Still, as humanly created phenomena they can express feelings. As can sounds and visual signals. People have such forms of expression in common with other organisms. Animals and other creatures can express emotions, but as the neurobiologist Antonio Damasio asserts, only people experience feelings. In his vocabulary, feelings are emotions that are perceived and understood as emotions by the one who experiences them.

Emotions are probably not an expression of universal experiences. Certainly, many theoreticians assume a repertoire of emotions that are common for all people, as for example, fear, anger, sorrow, joy, surprise and disgust. Some of these reactions are common to several other mammals as well as humans. Some emotions can be evoked instinctively. But the expression of most emotions can vary, and what evokes them can also be different. The judgement of different emotions’ value is likewise not always the same. Emotions are not just tied to common biological conditions, but also to varying social conditions. Martha Nussbaum claims in *Upheavals of Thought. The Intelligence of Emotions* that “human beings experience emotions in ways that are shaped both by individual history and by social norms” (Nussbaum 2001, 140). She reckons that emotions are “…elements of our common animality with considerable adaptive significance: so their biological basis is likely to be common to all” (141). But she quickly adds, “But this does not mean that emotions are not differently shaped by different societies” (ibid.). She points out several sources of social variation herself. In the first place, physical conditions play an important role. Among other things different societies are vulnerable to different types of risk, something that naturally has meaning for experiences of fear, for example. Secondly, metaphysical, religious and cosmological belief systems influence our emotional experiences. For example, what one
believes is in store for people after death plays an especially big role in emotions such as fear of death and grief over the departed. Thirdly, Nussbaum believes that a society’s cultural specific customs and routines have an effect on an individual’s emotional experiences. She illustrates this by referring to different practices of child rearing, where encouragement for high levels of activity versus immobility naturally will shape emotional experiences in very different ways. Nussbaum also mentions language as a possible factor, but simultaneously urges caution with regard to placing too much weight on linguistic differences as it concerns emotional experiences. The terms one uses about different emotions is probably not decisive in how one experiences them, nor is whether one verbalizes emotional experiences to a greater or lesser degree. She appears to mean that language first and foremost plays a role in showing how different societies create different classifications between feelings and refers to different concepts of love. The fifth factor Nussbaum stresses are social norms generally. She believes that the values of different societies show themselves in emotional expression and experiences, that is, she considers emotions as “evaluative appraisals” (157).

II

Independent of different verbalizations of emotional experiences, linguistic and written expression of feelings represent advanced linguistic, literary and cultural systems that require competence in order to perceive and interpret. This competence can be learned. Stories, and also fictive stories, can create situations for experimentation and become places to practice emotional understanding. Cognitive narratologists such as Alan Palmer and Lisa Zunshine argue that “the way in which we attempt to make sense of fictional narratives is similar to the way in which we try to make sense of other people. They [Palmer and Zunshine] argue that we understand narratives by understanding the minds of the characters and narrators, that is, their intentions and motivations” (Alber and Fludernik 2010, 12). I think one should add: their feelings, affects and emotions. I also think there is reason to believe that the process can be reversed. We can be better trained to understand both ourselves and other people by reading stories. The same is probably true for stories on film as well. Whether we then become “better” people is another question.

The goal of this book has partly been to present individual analyses of important works with the aim of contributing to the research traditions surrounding the selected works, but the purpose has also partly been by means of these analyses to test some points of view, concepts and areas of focus that hopefully can have a cer-
tain transfer value to affective narratological analysis of other works. In this conclusion, I will attempt to summarize some of these elements that I believe can have this transfer value.

III

A summary of the analyses shows that both space and time elements are important to investigate in an analysis of affective narratology. In addition, the numerous sets of possible emotional sources of stimuli are an important factor in the process of analysis. The emotional subjects involved, both main and minor characters are, of course, also of prime importance.

Emotional space is a broad category that spans concrete places, the places or rooms where literary persons are located, to national or cultural spaces where particular “narrative emotions” stamp the inhabitants’ affective disposition. On the basis of categories like emotional space, one can search for both emotional micro-geographies in literary works and basic cultural macro-geographies. There are examples of both of them in the analyses in this book. Emotionally coded spaces are used by Dostoevsky in The Brothers Karamazov. Zosima’s monastery cell is an example. In this case, the space is institutionally and conventionally coded. But emotional space can also be coded by means of the particular literary context, as, for example, the decayed gazebo in the back garden where Dmitri confides in Alyosha, or the various rooms where the Hunger hero lives, the streets where he wanders or the parks where he tries to write. The emotional coding of a literary space will also often depend on which persons are found there at the same time. The emotional charge changes when Dmitri enters Zosima’s monastery cell. The Hunger hero’s emotional state is highly susceptible to people he encounters quite by chance in the streets. The characters positions in relation to each other can also have an emotional effect, as seen in the instance where the Hunger hero meets Ylajali for the first time. They pass by each other a number of times, and there is little doubt that the emotional state of the Hunger hero changes when he is observed from the rear. I would suppose that analytical attention to emotional coding of literary space, such as I have exemplified in this book, could possibly be relevant for affective narratology generally.

Simultaneously, emotional micro-geographies in individual texts can be encompassed by cultural macro-geographies that also can be emotionally coded. As mentioned, Martha Nussbaum asserts that we learn our emotional repertoire from the “narrative emotions” of cultural contexts. In the case of Dostoevsky, the portrayal of The Brothers Karamazov is placed within a larger context where Pan-
Slavic ideas are in opposition to impulses from the West. I am convinced myself that the extreme individual passion for truth in both Kierkegaard’s *Fear and Trembling* and Ibsen’s *Brand* have contributed to installing a powerful “narrative emotion” in Nordic culture. In *Gurresange* J.P. Jacobsen made use of a concrete geographical place in Denmark, Gurre, that has a long historical tradition in literature, and this plays a part in the work’s intertextual potential for meaning. The emotional typology in *Hunger* is ordinarily interpreted in connection with cultural and literary-historical tendencies especially tied to the 1890s. The most thorough attempt in this book in analyzing emotional macro-geographies is tied to feelings of honor and the cultural-historical development and distribution of concepts of honor. The hypothesis is that in our part of the world, we have evolved away from a pronounced honor culture that today is in contrast to what I have called intact honor cultures. Such enormous emotional spaces can be the cause of fundamental cultural conflicts, and are important objects of research not only in specialized literary contexts.

IV

Elements of time in literary description are interesting for affective narratology, among other reasons because duration of emotions plays different roles in people’s lives. Impulse control can vary considerably from person to person, maybe even from situation to situation. This is not a question of traditional narratological techniques for regulating the durability relationship between *story* and *discourse*, but rather that what Keith Oatley calls *reactive emotions*, *moods*, *sentiments*, and *preferences* can be of interest in describing peoples’ emotional dispositions, also the dispositions of literary characters. As was shown in the book’s analyses, Patrick Colm Hogan has suggested several narratological terms that to a certain extent correspond with Oatley’s psychological concepts, that is *incidents*, *events*, *episodes*, *stories* and *work*. Both Oatley’s and Hogan’s designations have proven useful in the analyses in this book. The same is true of Alison Jaggar’s concept of *gut reactions*, which I applied in the analysis of *Brand*. Both Dmitri and Fyodor Pavlovich proved to have little control over their *reactive emotions*, and this emerged as intrinsic to their personal fates. It was shown to be equally determinative for the narrative depiction, which was marked by *incidents* and *events*. A distinctive feature was that the story moved from affect to affect to just as high a degree as it did from event to event. Not just epic events led to emotional reactions; it was the opposite to the same extent: emotional reactions shaped epic events. Still, in Dmitri’s case we saw that the strong short-lasting affects were
combined with a noteworthy and paradoxical lasting love for Katerina Ivanovna. In the case of Ivan and Alyosha, the emotional pattern was to a greater degree characterized by feelings of longer durability, something that did, however, change towards the end of the novel for Ivan. One could say that Dmitri and Ivan manifested low road and high road reactions, respectively. The two also demonstrated another important pattern of differences. Feelings do not exist just in pure forms, no one is characterized by one type of feelings. But the relationship between dissimilar feelings can be different. Ivan manifests ambivalence, where different feelings exist simultaneously in the psyche. Dmitri demonstrates to a greater degree rapid changes between dissimilar emotions, that is, an oscillating affective pattern. We also saw the same pattern in the hero of Hunger. In the comparison between Gurresange and Gurrellieder we observed that the two artists each took his own direction with regard to temporality. Jacobsen wrote mainly by means of using events, while Schönberg had a tendency to fill out ellipses and shape stories. In Hunger we saw that the hero was characterized not just by short-lived emotions, but by momentary impulses, micro-affects, as Hamsun called fractional feelings. They contributed to undermining continuity in the hero’s life. He practically became a victim of his changing emotional impulses, and the narrative presentation was episodic.

Another important aspect respecting the dimension of time is the sequencing of the narrative elements. This is not a question of the traditional narratological interest in synchrony and anachrony. It concerns the tendency or inclination of emotions to be included in combinations which thereby shape psychological scripts and narrative sequences. This is a phenomenon that can be observed from the instinctive types of reactions such as fright/flight (low road reactions) to the comprehensive religious philosophical systems we find in Søren Kierkegaard. So scripts can be determined by more or less universal instincts, by cultural traditions or by individual distinctiveness, so called life scripts. The combinations that different emotions make up in dissimilar literary figures will be of interest for affective narratological analysis. Unexpected, strange or surprising scripts especially will call for interpretation. Unexpected scripts can create enigmas in stories and challenge the reader (and other characters in the story) to consider causal attributions, as Hogan calls them. In The Brothers Karamazov we found several such individual life scripts that shaped tension creating puzzles in the story, and in attempts to understand the persons involved. Still, perhaps the most remarkable example in this book’s analyses was Kierkegaard’s development of emotional scripts into fixed philosophical or existential combinations that almost obtain status as conditions of religious faith. Anxiety, fear and trembling are not just isolated
emotions, but are included in two Kierkegaardian “Movements” that lead to faith and existential rest. Emotions’ instinctive, cultural or individual combinations in narrative sequences will often be of special interest in an affective narratological analysis, but they do not necessarily lead to scansion of entire texts by means of instruments such as analeptics or prolepsis.

V

A third area that often can be of interest in an affective narratology analysis is the source of the stimulus for emotional reactions. There are a great many possibilities, and different literary characters’ inclinations in receiving stimuli from different sources can often contribute to establishing a basis for understanding of the specific figure. Ivan Karamazov was a striking case; he apparently has an ideological impetus as a foundation for his emotional pattern of reactions, but he breaks down towards the end of the story and loses the ability to resist purely hallucinatory stimuli sources. Brand too proves to have a strong ideological basis for his emotions, but it is evident in several instances that he also has spontaneous gut reactions that he must overcome in order to preserve his ideological basis of existence. In both of these cases the emotional reactions to basic stimuli reveals strong tensions in the personalities of the two literary figures. Alyosha demonstrated less inner tension but his emotional pattern also was marked to a high degree by his religious disposition, and in his case this resulted in a relatively durable and stable emotional pattern. In Brand’s case the foundation for the ideological impetus is a definite Christian belief, something that shows that stimuli sources for emotional reactions can be culturally determined. We approach Nussbaum’s “narrative emotions” again, or Ahmed’s outside in emotions. In Hunger we discovered stimuli sources that lie completely on the other end of the scale, the tiny almost unnoticeable sensual influences people can be exposed to in normal everyday situations. Two people pass each other on the street and they touch each other slightly and by chance: This initiates a far-reaching emotional progression. It centers around an insignificant tactile impression (an exteroceptive stimulus) which then begins the entire Ylajali story in Hunger. Hunger also shows to what extent people can react to inner sources of stimuli, impulses from the body itself (proprioceptive reactions), from thoughts and reflections (interoceptive reactions) – or simply from dreams. Among inner sources of stimuli are memories. Examples of this were evident in the postwar literature that was briefly discussed in the chapter on honor feelings. Gunvor Hofmo was perhaps the most conspicuous example, but Hoel’s Meeting at the Milestone also treats to a great extent emotions based in memories.
Initially there are many emotional subjects involved in a story. Traditional narratology’s differentiation of the communicative authorities in a story are also naturally a concern when one places a focus on emotional aspects. The narrator can be an emotional subject and can express his feelings in the story. Those who are narrated about can be emotional subjects and they can be real or fictional, few or many. Those who are reading or listening to the story can also be emotional subjects who respond to the narrative. All three of these authorities can be differentiated. In literary narratives we have on the dispatching side an actual storyteller outside of the text (the author) and an narrator inside the text who can be covert or overt. On the side of reception there will be actual readers or listeners, but an implied reader can also be found in the text. The receptive authority in the text can, similar to the dispatching authority, be obvious or hidden in the text. Among the subjects of the narrative, there can be one or more emotional subjects, and they can be illuminated and elucidated by means of different techniques of focusing or points of view.

In this book the focus has been directed to the texts and the emotional subjects internal to the stories. This means that the book contains literary text analyses. Only to a small degree and in a few cases have the actual authors outside the text and the actual readers been mentioned. Emphasizing these authorities would have demanded other methods of analysis. My ambition has exclusively been to contribute to the development of literary text analysis and the place of emotions therein. It’s nothing new that literary figures’ emotionality is included as a part in interpretation of narrative texts. Still, it is conspicuous that such interpretations often have been tied to specific psychoanalytical theories that act as a filter for the reading of the text (perhaps especially for interpretation of symbols). It has often been a question of theories that are no longer used or used to a small degree by experts who interpret feelings of actual people (for example Freud, Lacan or Kristeva) and in which linking to narrative elements or techniques has been quite weak or ad hoc (as possible exceptions one could name emphasis on literary variants of the “talking cure,” repetition compulsion, and mechanisms of transmission).

There are examples of completely traditional questions of point of view having meaning for analyses in this book. Kierkegaard’s choice when he is portraying an actual variant of the “Knight of Faith” is conspicuous, as I have attempted to show. When a parishioner gets the idea that he is going to do as Abraham did after hearing a sermon in church, Kierkegaard chooses to follow the minister who has delivered the sermon instead of the bewildered parishioner, something that helps to
make it easy for the author to weaken the danger of a figure who wants to override “the universal.”

More specific for the analyses of affective narratology in this book is the discovery of so-called emotional trigger figures, that is (most often) minor characters in the story who react to the narrative or to the behavior and expression of feelings of the main characters, and thereby signal to the readers both the intensity of the emotions portrayed and the anticipated reception of them by the reader. There were several of them in Dostoevsky and Ibsen, fewer in Hamsun. Of course, this is connected to the nature of the texts – Hunger is a first person novel, but it is also connected to a literary-historical development. Such “reading instructions” have little place in modern literature. Another interesting element was the use of an analytical plane in the texts’ presentation of emotions. This made it relevant to differentiate between performative and analytical emotionality. In The Brothers Karamazov, partly Zosima, partly the narrator acted as a standard in the text where emotional reactions were analyzed and interpreted, so that the reader gained assistance in understanding what was told. Such authorities became rarer and rarer in modern literature, but found a new position in stream-of-consciousness texts, where the reflective subject is engaged with self analysis, including the analysis of his own emotions. However, in such cases the problematics of reliability are revived in a new way. To a much greater extent than in Zosima’s case, the reader will tend to be skeptical of the Hunger hero’s analyses of the story’s emotional reactions. Most likely with good reason.

VII

The analytical elements that are brought up in this summary are elements that I assume can also be present in other analyses of affective narratology. There is, however, reason to emphasize that analyses of this type naturally only give meaning if they contribute to relevant and renewed readings of interesting texts. The value of this book depends on whether the concrete analyses have shown this to be the case. My purpose has not been to add new standard elements to traditional narratological analysis as we know it from Genette and onwards. Such analyses are apt to wind up with a series of itemizations of textual facts that it is not always so easy to employ in insightful syntheses. My goals in this book have been of a hermeneutic nature. I believe analyses in affective narratology have their foremost value in that context.


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