

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion is a seminal work that explores the intricate relationship between emotions and power structures within society. This influential text examines how emotions are not merely individual feelings but are deeply embedded in cultural and political contexts that shape social relations. Sara Ahmed's analysis delves into how emotions circulate, stick, and align individuals and groups, forming what she terms "affective economies." Through this lens, the book highlights the ways emotions contribute to the formation of identities and the maintenance of social hierarchies. This article will provide a comprehensive overview of Sara Ahmed's key concepts, the theoretical framework she employs, and the broader implications of her work for understanding cultural politics and emotional dynamics. Readers will gain insight into the critical intersections of emotion, identity, and power, as well as the continuing relevance of Ahmed's scholarship in contemporary social discourse.

- Introduction to Sara Ahmed's Cultural Politics of Emotion
- Core Concepts in Sara Ahmed's Analysis
- The Role of Emotions in Power and Identity
- Affective Economies and Emotional Circulation
- Implications for Social and Cultural Studies

Introduction to Sara Ahmed's Cultural Politics of Emotion

Sara Ahmed's book, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, presents a groundbreaking approach to understanding how emotions function within social and political spheres. Unlike traditional views that treat emotions as private, psychological states, Ahmed locates emotions within public and cultural frameworks. She argues that emotions do political work by shaping social boundaries, influencing who belongs and who is excluded. The text draws on feminist theory, critical race studies, and affect theory to challenge dominant narratives about emotion. By repositioning emotion as a social force, Ahmed opens up new avenues for analyzing how feelings are entangled with histories of oppression and resistance. This section introduces the foundational elements of Ahmed's approach and sets the stage for a detailed exploration of her key contributions.

Background and Context

The book was published in 2004 and quickly became influential in various academic fields. Ahmed's work addresses gaps in how emotions had been previously marginalized in cultural studies and political theory. It responds to the need for a framework that accounts for the social production of emotions and their role in maintaining or contesting power relations. This context is essential for

appreciating the innovative nature of Ahmed's cultural politics of emotion.

Overview of the Book's Structure

The Cultural Politics of Emotion is organized into chapters that explore different emotions such as hate, fear, and love, illustrating how these emotions operate politically. Ahmed uses case studies and cultural examples to demonstrate how emotions become attached to bodies, objects, and ideas, influencing social dynamics. The structure supports a progressive deepening of the reader's understanding of emotional politics.

Core Concepts in Sara Ahmed's Analysis

At the heart of Sara Ahmed's cultural politics of emotion are several core concepts that redefine how emotions are understood within social theory. These include the notions of affect, attachment, and the circulation of emotions. Ahmed's work emphasizes that emotions are not static but move between people and objects, creating networks of meaning and power. This section unpacks these foundational ideas and explains their significance in the broader theoretical framework.

Affect and Emotion

Ahmed distinguishes between affect and emotion to highlight the complexity of feelings in social contexts. Affect refers to the intensity and bodily responses prior to conscious emotional categorization, while emotions are socially and culturally shaped interpretations of these affects. Understanding this distinction helps explain how emotions become charged with political significance and contribute to social regulation.

Attachment and Detachment

One of Ahmed's key insights is the concept of emotional attachment, which describes how emotions bind individuals to certain objects, identities, or ideologies. Conversely, emotions can also produce detachment, exclusion, or alienation. These dynamics are central to how communities form and sustain themselves, as well as how others are marginalized or vilified.

Emotions as Social and Cultural Constructs

Ahmed argues that emotions are not innate or purely personal but are constructed through cultural narratives and social practices. This perspective challenges essentialist views and opens up space for analyzing how emotions are deployed in political projects, such as nationalism, racism, or feminist activism.

The Role of Emotions in Power and Identity

Sara Ahmed's cultural politics of emotion critically examines the interplay between emotions, power structures, and identity formation. Emotions are shown to play a pivotal role in shaping social hierarchies and reinforcing or challenging dominant ideologies. This section explores how emotions are implicated in the politics of race, gender, and other identity categories.

Emotions and Social Boundaries

Emotions help delineate social boundaries by signaling who is included within a community and who is excluded. Feelings such as fear, hate, or disgust often target marginalized groups, reinforcing social divisions and justifying discriminatory practices. Ahmed's work reveals how these emotional boundaries are maintained and contested.

Hate and Fear in Political Contexts

The book provides detailed analyses of hate and fear as political emotions that mobilize collective identities and justify exclusionary policies. Ahmed explores how hate becomes attached to racialized bodies and how fear shapes responses to immigration, terrorism, and social change. These emotions serve as tools for maintaining power and control.

Love and Resistance

Conversely, Ahmed also discusses the transformative potential of love and positive emotions in resisting oppression. Love can create solidarities and foster political alliances that challenge dominant power relations. This dual examination of negative and positive emotions highlights the complexity of emotional politics.

Affective Economies and Emotional Circulation

A central theoretical contribution of Sara Ahmed's cultural politics of emotion is the concept of affective economies, which describes how emotions circulate among bodies, objects, and signs, creating networks of meaning and power. This section delves into the mechanics of emotional circulation and its implications for understanding social cohesion and conflict.

How Emotions "Stick"

Ahmed explains that emotions "stick" to certain signs or bodies, such as race, gender, or nationality, making these categories emotionally charged. This stickiness shapes social perceptions and interactions, often reinforcing stereotypes and prejudices. The process of emotional sticking is fundamental to the formation of collective identities.

The Movement of Emotions

Emotions are not confined to individual experiences but move through social spaces, influencing groups and communities. Ahmed's affective economies highlight how emotions are exchanged, amplified, or resisted, affecting the social and political climate. This dynamic movement underscores the relational nature of emotions.

Examples of Affective Economies

- Racialized hate that circulates in nationalist rhetoric
- Fear of the "other" in immigration debates
- Love and solidarity in feminist and social justice movements
- Disgust attached to marginalized bodies in public spaces

Implications for Social and Cultural Studies

The cultural politics of emotion as theorized by Sara Ahmed has significant implications for a variety of academic disciplines and practical fields. It offers a framework for analyzing how emotions shape social life, influence political agendas, and contribute to cultural meanings. This final section explores the broader impact of Ahmed's work and its ongoing relevance.

Influence on Feminist and Critical Race Theories

Ahmed's emphasis on emotion has enriched feminist and critical race scholarship by foregrounding the role of feelings in experiences of oppression and resistance. Her work highlights how emotions are integral to identity politics and social justice activism, offering tools for critical analysis and transformative praxis.

Applications in Media and Cultural Studies

The framework of affective economies has been applied to understanding media representations, public discourse, and cultural narratives. It enables scholars to trace how emotional attachments influence public opinion and cultural production, shedding light on mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion.

Contemporary Relevance

In an era marked by political polarization, social movements, and global crises, Sara Ahmed's cultural politics of emotion remains a vital resource for interpreting the emotional undercurrents of

public life. The work encourages a critical awareness of how emotions shape collective experiences and political realities.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is Sara Ahmed and what is her contribution to the cultural politics of emotion?

Sara Ahmed is a feminist scholar and writer known for her work on the cultural politics of emotion, exploring how emotions shape social and political life, particularly in relation to power, identity, and belonging.

What is the central theme of Sara Ahmed's book 'The Cultural Politics of Emotion'?

The central theme of the book is how emotions circulate and are used to shape social norms, identities, and political alliances, demonstrating that emotions are not just personal feelings but have cultural and political significance.

How does Sara Ahmed define the role of emotions in shaping social norms?

Ahmed argues that emotions play a crucial role in shaping social norms by directing what bodies and identities are deemed acceptable or excluded, thus influencing inclusion and exclusion within social and political communities.

What is the significance of 'affective economies' in Ahmed's work?

Affective economies refer to the way emotions circulate between bodies and signs, attaching themselves to certain objects or groups and thereby influencing social and political relations. This concept helps explain how emotions contribute to the formation of social hierarchies and power structures.

How does Sara Ahmed link emotions to issues of race and racism?

Ahmed shows that emotions like fear, hate, and disgust are often racialized and used to justify exclusion or discrimination, illustrating how emotional responses are culturally constructed and tied to histories of racism and colonialism.

In what way does 'The Cultural Politics of Emotion' engage

with feminist theory?

The book engages with feminist theory by highlighting how emotions intersect with gendered experiences and power dynamics, and by challenging traditional views that separate rationality from emotion in political discourse.

How can understanding the cultural politics of emotion help in contemporary social justice movements?

Understanding the cultural politics of emotion allows activists and scholars to recognize how emotions influence public sentiment, mobilize support, and maintain or challenge power structures, making it a valuable tool for strategizing and fostering solidarity in social justice movements.

Additional Resources

1. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* by Sara Ahmed

This foundational text explores how emotions are not just personal feelings but are deeply embedded in cultural and political contexts. Ahmed argues that emotions shape the way societies organize themselves, influencing power relations and social norms. The book examines how emotions like fear, hate, and love circulate and affect collective identities and political actions.

2. *Living a Feminist Life* by Sara Ahmed

In this influential work, Ahmed combines personal narrative with feminist theory to explore the everyday experiences of living as a feminist. She discusses how feminist orientations shape one's interactions and how resistance to sexism and racism is a daily practice. The book offers insightful reflections on the persistence of feminist commitments in the face of systemic oppression.

3. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* by Sara Ahmed

Ahmed investigates how orientation affects the way individuals perceive and interact with the world, focusing on queer bodies and experiences. The book challenges normative ways of being and seeing, emphasizing how space and direction are tied to social norms and power structures. It is a key text in understanding the intersection of phenomenology with queer theory.

4. *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* by Sara Ahmed

This book critically examines how institutions implement diversity policies and the emotional labor involved in these processes. Ahmed reveals the complexities and contradictions within organizational attempts to be inclusive, highlighting how racism persists despite diversity initiatives. It offers a critical perspective on institutional change and social justice work.

5. *The Affect Theory Reader* edited by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth

This collection of essays offers a comprehensive overview of affect theory, which is closely related to Ahmed's work on emotions. The book includes influential writings that explore the role of affect and emotion in culture, politics, and social life. It is a valuable resource for understanding the broader theoretical landscape surrounding cultural emotions.

6. *Emotions and Social Movements* edited by Helena Flam and Debra King

This edited volume explores the role of emotions in the formation and dynamics of social movements. It provides empirical studies and theoretical insights on how emotions motivate collective action and sustain political engagement. The book complements Ahmed's exploration of emotions by situating

them in activist contexts.

7. *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education* by Nel Noddings

Noddings examines the role of emotions in educational settings, emphasizing the ethical dimensions of care and empathy. The book discusses how emotional engagement shapes learning environments and interpersonal relationships. It provides a complementary perspective to Ahmed's cultural approach by focusing on emotional practices in education.

8. *Ordinary Affects* by Kathleen Stewart

Stewart's book delves into the everyday emotional experiences that shape social life, aligning with Ahmed's interest in the ordinary circulation of emotions. Through vivid ethnographic writing, she captures the subtle affects that influence perceptions and interactions. The work highlights the significance of seemingly mundane emotions in cultural politics.

9. *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* by Barbara H. Rosenwein

This historical study explores how emotions functioned within communities during the early Middle Ages, offering a long-term perspective on the cultural politics of emotion. Rosenwein argues that emotional norms create bonds and boundaries within groups, shaping social cohesion and conflict. The book enriches understanding of how emotions have historically been politicized and regulated.

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Sara Ahmed: The Cultural Politics of Emotion - Deconstructing Feeling and Power

Introduction:

Are your emotions simply personal experiences, or are they subtly shaped by the cultural forces surrounding us? Sara Ahmed's groundbreaking work, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, compels us to question this very assumption. This in-depth exploration dives into Ahmed's key arguments, examining how emotions are not merely individual sensations but are deeply implicated in power dynamics, social hierarchies, and the very fabric of our social worlds. We'll dissect her central concepts, explore critical analyses, and ultimately understand how emotions function as tools of social control and resistance. This post offers a comprehensive guide to understanding Ahmed's complex and insightful contributions to feminist theory, postcolonial studies, and critical affect theory.

Understanding Ahmed's Central Argument:

Ahmed's central thesis challenges the conventional understanding of emotions as purely personal and subjective experiences. She argues that emotions are "cultural objects" - meaning their expression, interpretation, and significance are shaped by social, historical, and political contexts. These contexts are not neutral; they are deeply infused with power relations that determine which emotions are valued, which are deemed unacceptable, and how they are used to regulate behavior.

The Politics of Feeling: Affect and Social Control:

Ahmed introduces the concept of "affect" - a pre-cognitive, bodily experience of feeling - to demonstrate how emotions are often deployed unconsciously to maintain social order. She illustrates how feelings of discomfort, disgust, or fear are strategically employed to marginalize certain groups and maintain existing power structures. This is not simply about individual prejudice; it's about how social structures produce these feelings and channel them to shape social interactions.

The Queerness of Feeling: Challenging Normativity:

Ahmed's work significantly contributes to queer theory by analyzing how heteronormative ideals shape the acceptability of emotional expressions. She argues that emotions deemed "unacceptable" or "queer" often belong to marginalized groups and challenge dominant norms. The rejection of these "unwanted" feelings serves to uphold social hierarchies and enforce conformity. By highlighting the diverse range of emotional experiences, Ahmed advocates for a more inclusive and less judgmental understanding of emotional landscapes.

Emotions as Social Objects: Circulation and Ownership:

Ahmed analyzes how emotions "circulate" within social contexts. This circulation is not random; rather, it is strategically directed and controlled. Emotions are "owned" and deployed by individuals and institutions to exert influence, achieve specific goals, and maintain power imbalances. For instance, the use of anger to intimidate, or the strategic deployment of empathy to gain support, reveals how emotions are potent tools in social interaction.

The Body as a Site of Emotion:

Ahmed emphasizes the embodied nature of emotion. Emotions are not simply internal states; they manifest physically, shaping our bodies and influencing our behavior. She examines how the body becomes a site of social regulation, where emotional displays are policed and controlled to enforce social norms. For example, the expectations placed on women to express emotions in specific ways highlight how the body is a battleground for the negotiation of power through emotion.

Critique and Limitations:

While highly influential, Ahmed's work has not been without critique. Some scholars argue that her focus on the social construction of emotion risks downplaying the role of individual agency and subjective experience. Others suggest that her analysis might overemphasize the power of social structures to the detriment of individual capacity for resistance and change. However, these critiques often engage with Ahmed's work precisely because of its challenging and thought-provoking nature.

Book Outline: The Cultural Politics of Emotion

I. Introduction:

Introduces the concept of emotions as cultural objects.

Outlines the book's central arguments concerning the relationship between emotion, power, and social structures.

Sets the stage for analyzing the political implications of emotion.

II. Feeling and the Body:

Explores the embodied nature of emotion.

Discusses the role of the body in expressing and regulating emotions.

Analyzes how social norms shape acceptable emotional displays.

III. The Politics of Feeling:

Examines how emotions are used to maintain social hierarchies.

Analyzes how certain feelings are deemed acceptable or unacceptable based on social norms.

Explores the strategic use of emotions to exert power and control.

IV. Emotions and Social Objects:

Discusses the concept of emotions as circulating social objects.

Analyzes how emotions are "owned" and deployed by individuals and institutions.

Explores the implications of emotion circulation for social justice and equality.

V. Conclusion:

Summarizes the book's central arguments.

Offers insights into the future of emotion studies.

Highlights the significance of understanding the cultural politics of emotion for social change.

Detailed Explanation of the Outline Points:

(I) Introduction: Ahmed begins by establishing the premise that emotions are not merely private, individual experiences but are significantly shaped by social and political forces. She introduces the concept of "cultural objects" to explain how emotions are created, interpreted, and valued within specific cultural contexts. This sets the stage for the subsequent chapters by establishing the crucial link between individual emotional experiences and broader social dynamics.

(II) Feeling and the Body: This section delves into the embodied nature of emotion, arguing that emotions are not merely mental states but are deeply physical experiences. Ahmed explores how our bodies react to emotions, how these reactions are shaped by social expectations, and how emotional displays are regulated and controlled. This understanding of the embodied nature of emotion is central to her argument about how social structures influence emotional lives.

(III) The Politics of Feeling: Here, Ahmed exposes how emotions are used to reinforce power

dynamics and maintain social hierarchies. She analyzes how certain emotions, often associated with marginalized groups, are deemed unacceptable or "queer," while other emotions, aligning with dominant norms, are privileged. This chapter highlights the political nature of emotion, showing how feelings are not neutral but are actively used to maintain existing power structures.

(IV) Emotions and Social Objects: This section introduces the crucial concept of emotions as circulating social objects. Emotions are not static experiences but move through social spaces, being exchanged, deployed, and ultimately used to influence others. Ahmed analyzes how this circulation of emotions contributes to maintaining or challenging social hierarchies, demonstrating how emotions function as tools for social control or resistance.

(V) Conclusion: Ahmed summarizes her arguments, emphasizing the importance of understanding the cultural politics of emotion for achieving social justice. She highlights the ongoing need to critically examine how emotions are shaped by social structures and how these structures can be challenged through a critical understanding of emotional experience.

FAQs:

1. What is the main difference between affect and emotion according to Sara Ahmed? Ahmed distinguishes affect as a pre-personal bodily sensation, while emotion is a socially shaped and culturally constructed experience built upon affect.
2. How does Ahmed's work relate to feminist theory? Her work challenges patriarchal norms that dictate acceptable emotional expression for women and other marginalized groups.
3. How does Ahmed use the concept of "queerness" in her analysis of emotion? She uses "queer" to describe emotions that disrupt heteronormative expectations and challenge dominant power structures.
4. What is meant by the "circulation" of emotions? It refers to how emotions are exchanged, deployed, and used in social interactions to influence others and maintain power relations.
5. How does Ahmed's work connect to postcolonial studies? Her work analyzes how colonial legacies shape emotional landscapes and maintain power imbalances in postcolonial contexts.
6. What are some critiques of Ahmed's work? Some critiques argue that she underemphasizes individual agency and the subjective experience of emotion.
7. How can understanding the cultural politics of emotion contribute to social change? By understanding how emotions are politically deployed, we can challenge oppressive power structures and promote social justice.
8. What are some examples of emotions used as tools of social control? Disgust, fear, and anger are often used to marginalize and control certain groups.
9. What is the significance of Ahmed's work for critical affect theory? Her work is foundational to critical affect theory, shifting the focus from individual feelings to their social and political dimensions.

Related Articles:

1. "Affect Theory and the Politics of Feeling: A Critical Introduction": An overview of affect theory and its relationship to political and social issues.
2. "The Embodiment of Emotion: A Phenomenological Perspective": Explores the embodied nature of emotion from a phenomenological standpoint.
3. "Queer Feelings: Challenging Heteronormative Emotionality": A deeper dive into queer theory and its intersection with emotional expression.
4. "The Social Construction of Emotion: A Sociological Analysis": Explores the sociological perspective on how emotions are shaped by social forces.
5. "Power and Emotion: An Analysis of Social Control": Examines the use of emotion as a tool of social control in various contexts.
6. "Emotion and Postcolonial Theory: Negotiating Colonial Legacies": Discusses the relationship between emotion and the lasting effects of colonialism.
7. "Critical Affect Theory: Beyond Individual Experience": Examines the key concepts and critiques within critical affect theory.
8. "The Body Politic: Emotion, Power, and the Body": Explores the connection between emotion, power, and the physical body.
9. "Feminist Approaches to Emotion: Challenging Gendered Norms": A critical examination of feminist perspectives on emotion and gender.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: The Cultural Politics of Emotion Sara Ahmed, 2013-11-15 First Published in 2004. Routledge is an imprint of Taylor & Francis, an informa company.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: *Cultural Politics of Emotion* Sara Ahmed, 2014-06-11 Emotions work to define who we are as well as shape what we do and this is no more powerfully at play than in the world of politics. Ahmed considers how emotions keep us invested in relationships of power, and also shows how this use of emotion could be crucial to areas such as feminist and queer politics. Debates on international terrorism, asylum and migration, as well as reconciliation and reparation, are explored through topical case studies. In this book the difficult issues are confronted head on. The Cultural Politics of Emotion is in dialogue with recent literature on emotions within gender studies, cultural studies, sociology, psychology and philosophy. Throughout the book, Ahmed develops a theory of how emotions work, and the effects they have on our day-to-day lives. New for this edition A substantial 15,000-word Afterword on 'Emotions and Their Objects' which provides an original contribution to the burgeoning field of affect studies A revised Bibliography Updated throughout.

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sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: The Cultural Politics of Emotion Sara Ahmed, 2004 In *The Cultural Politics of the Emotions*, Sara Ahmed develops a new methodology for

reading the emotionality of texts. She offers analyses of the role of emotions in debates on international terrorism, asylum and migration, and reconciliation and reparation, and reflects on the role of emotions in feminist and queer politics. Of interest to readers in gender studies and cultural studies, the psychology and sociology of emotions, and phenomenology and psychoanalysis, *The Cultural Politics of the Emotions* offers new ways of thinking about our inner and our outer lives.--Publisher description.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: *Differences that Matter* Sara Ahmed, 1998-11-26 *Differences That Matter* challenges existing ways of theorising the relationship between feminism and postmodernism which ask 'is or should feminism be modern or postmodern?' Sara Ahmed suggests that postmodernism has been allowed to dictate feminist debates and calls instead for feminist theorists to speak (back) to postmodernism, rather than simply speak on (their relationship to) it. Such a 'speaking back' involves a refusal to position postmodernism as a generalisable condition of the world and requires closer readings of what postmodernism is actually 'doing' in a variety of disciplinary contexts. Sara Ahmed hence examines constructions of postmodernism in relation to rights, ethics, subjectivity, authorship, meta-fiction and film.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: *Queer Phenomenology* Sara Ahmed, 2006-12-04 In this groundbreaking work, Sara Ahmed demonstrates how queer studies can put phenomenology to productive use. Focusing on the "orientation" aspect of "sexual orientation" and the "orient" in "orientalism," Ahmed examines what it means for bodies to be situated in space and time. Bodies take shape as they move through the world directing themselves toward or away from objects and others. Being "orientated" means feeling at home, knowing where one stands, or having certain objects within reach. Orientations affect what is proximate to the body or what can be reached. A queer phenomenology, Ahmed contends, reveals how social relations are arranged spatially, how queerness disrupts and reorders these relations by not following the accepted paths, and how a politics of disorientation puts other objects within reach, those that might, at first glance, seem awry. Ahmed proposes that a queer phenomenology might investigate not only how the concept of orientation is informed by phenomenology but also the orientation of phenomenology itself. Thus she reflects on the significance of the objects that appear—and those that do not—as signs of orientation in classic phenomenological texts such as Husserl's *Ideas*. In developing a queer model of orientations, she combines readings of phenomenological texts—by Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Fanon—with insights drawn from queer studies, feminist theory, critical race theory, Marxism, and psychoanalysis. *Queer Phenomenology* points queer theory in bold new directions.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: *Blush* Elspeth Probyn, 2005 Exposes shame as a valuable emotion essential to our humanity.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: *The Promise of Happiness* Sara Ahmed, 2010-04-06 *The Promise of Happiness* is a provocative cultural critique of the imperative to be happy. It asks what follows when we make our desires and even our own happiness conditional on the happiness of others: "I just want you to be happy"; "I'm happy if you're happy." Combining philosophy and feminist cultural studies, Sara Ahmed reveals the affective and moral work performed by the "happiness duty," the expectation that we will be made happy by taking part in that which is deemed good, and that by being happy ourselves, we will make others happy. Ahmed maintains that happiness is a promise that directs us toward certain life choices and away from others. Happiness is promised to those willing to live their lives in the right way. Ahmed draws on the intellectual history of happiness, from classical accounts of ethics as the good life, through seventeenth-century writings on affect and the passions, eighteenth-century debates on virtue and education, and nineteenth-century utilitarianism. She engages with feminist, antiracist, and queer critics who have shown how happiness is used to justify social oppression, and how challenging oppression causes unhappiness. Reading novels and films including *Mrs. Dalloway*, *The Well of Loneliness*, *Bend It Like Beckham*, and *Children of Men*, Ahmed considers the plight of the figures who challenge and are challenged by the attribution of happiness to particular objects or social

ideals: the feminist killjoy, the unhappy queer, the angry black woman, and the melancholic migrant. Through her readings she raises critical questions about the moral order imposed by the injunction to be happy.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: Strange Encounters Sara Ahmed, 2013-02-01 Examining the relationship between strangers, embodiment and community, *Strange Encounters* challenges the assumptions that the stranger is simply anybody we do not recognize and instead proposes that he or she is socially constructed as somebody we already know. Using feminist and postcolonial theory this book examines the impact of multiculturalism and globalization on embodiment and community whilst considering the ethical and political implication of its critique for post-colonial feminism. A diverse range of texts are analyzed which produce the figure of 'the stranger', showing that it has alternatively been expelled as the origin of danger - such as in neighbourhood watch, or celebrated as the origin of difference - as in multiculturalism. The author argues that both of these standpoints are problematic as they involve 'stranger fetishism'; they assume that the stranger 'has a life of its own'.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: On Being Included Sara Ahmed, 2012-03-28 Ahmed argues that a commitment to diversity is frequently substituted for a commitment to actual change. She traces the work that diversity does, examining how the term is used and the way it serves to make questions about racism seem impertinent. Her study is based in universities and her research is primarily in the UK and Australia, but the argument is equally valid in North America and beyond.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: Your Heart is a Muscle the Size of a Fist Sunil Yapa, 2016-01-14 A TIME Magazine Best Book of 2016 An Amazon Best Book of 2016 A heart-stopping debut about protest and riot . . . 1999. Victor, homeless after a family tragedy, finds himself pounding the streets of Seattle with little meaning or purpose. He is the estranged son of the police chief of the city, and today his father is in charge of one of the largest protests in the history of Western democracy. But in a matter of hours reality will become a nightmare. Hordes of protesters - from all sections of society - will test the patience of the city's police force, and lives will be altered forever: two armed police officers will struggle to keep calm amid the threat of violence; a protester with a murderous past will make an unforgivable mistake; and a delegate from Sri Lanka will do whatever it takes to make it through the crowd to a meeting - a meeting that could dramatically change the fate of his country. In amongst the fray, Victor and his father are heading for a collision too. *Your Heart is a Muscle the Size of a Fist*, set during the World Trade Organization protests, is a deeply charged novel showcasing a distinct and exciting new literary voice.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: Feeling Power Megan Boler, 2004-11-23 First published in 1999. Megan Boler combines cultural history with ethical and multicultural analyses to explore how emotions have been disciplined, suppressed, or ignored at all levels of education and in educational theory. *FEELING POWER* charts the philosophies and practices developed over the last century to control social conflicts arising from gender, class, and race. The book traces the development of progressive pedagogies from civil rights and feminist movements to Boler's own recent studies of emotional intelligence and emotional literacy. Drawing on the formulation of emotion as knowledge within feminist, psychobiological, and post structuralist theories, Boler develops a unique theory of emotion missing from contemporary educational discourses.

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sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: Complaint! Sara Ahmed, 2021-08-09 In *Complaint!* Sara Ahmed examines what we can learn about power from those who complain about abuses of power. Drawing on oral and written testimonies from academics and students who have made complaints about harassment, bullying, and unequal working conditions at universities, Ahmed explores the gap between what is supposed to happen when complaints are made and what actually happens. To make complaints within institutions is to learn how they work and for whom they work:

complaint as feminist pedagogy. Ahmed explores how complaints are made behind closed doors and how doors are often closed on those who complain. To open these doors---to get complaints through, keep them going, or keep them alive---Ahmed emphasizes, requires forming new kinds of collectives. This book offers a systematic analysis of the methods used to stop complaints and a powerful and poetic meditation on what complaints can be used to do. Following a long lineage of Black feminist and feminist of color critiques of the university, Ahmed delivers a timely consideration of how institutional change becomes possible and why it is necessary.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: Willful Subjects Sara Ahmed, 2014-08-25 In *Willful Subjects* Sara Ahmed explores willfulness as a charge often made by some against others. One history of will is a history of attempts to eliminate willfulness from the will. Delving into philosophical and literary texts, Ahmed examines the relation between will and willfulness, ill will and good will, and the particular will and general will. Her reflections shed light on how will is embedded in a political and cultural landscape, how it is embodied, and how will and willfulness are socially mediated. Attentive to the wayward, the wandering, and the deviant, Ahmed considers how willfulness is taken up by those who have received its charge. Grounded in feminist, queer, and antiracist politics, her sui generis analysis of the willful subject, the figure who wills wrongly or wills too much, suggests that willfulness might be required to recover from the attempt at its elimination.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: The Emotional Self Deborah Lupton, 1998-06-18 'This addition to a growing number of texts which approach emotions and emotionality from a social constructionist perspective is well written, scholarly, accessible and interesting.... There is both breadth and depth to this work.' - *Feminism and Psychology* This broad-ranging and accessible book brings together social and cultural theory with original empirical research into the nature of the emotional self in contemporary western societies. The emphasis of the analysis is on the emotional self as a dynamic project that is continually shaped and reshaped via discourse, embodied sensations, memory, personal biography and interactions with others and objects. Using an interdisciplinary approach

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: Living a Feminist Life Sara Ahmed, 2016-12-22 In *Living a Feminist Life* Sara Ahmed shows how feminist theory is generated from everyday life and the ordinary experiences of being a feminist at home and at work. Building on legacies of feminist of color scholarship in particular, Ahmed offers a poetic and personal meditation on how feminists become estranged from worlds they critique—often by naming and calling attention to problems—and how feminists learn about worlds from their efforts to transform them. Ahmed also provides her most sustained commentary on the figure of the feminist killjoy introduced in her earlier work while showing how feminists create inventive solutions—such as forming support systems—to survive the shattering experiences of facing the walls of racism and sexism. The killjoy survival kit and killjoy manifesto, with which the book concludes, supply practical tools for how to live a feminist life, thereby strengthening the ties between the inventive creation of feminist theory and living a life that sustains it.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: The Threshold of the Visible World Kaja Silverman, 2013-11-19 In *The Threshold of the Visible World* Kaja Silverman advances a revolutionary new political aesthetic, exploring the possibilities for looking beyond the restrictive mandates of the self, and the normative aspects of the cultural image-repertoire. She provides a detailed account of the social and psychic forces which constrain us to look and identify in normative ways, and the violence which that normativity implies.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: Nineteenth-Century Nationalisms and Emotions in the Baltic Sea Region, 2021-07-19 This volume explores the production of loss in nationalist discourses during the long nineteenth century in the Baltic Sea region - how the notion of loss was charged with emotions in political writings, lectures, novels, paintings, letters and diaries.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: Bourdieu and Affect Threadgold, Steven, 2020-07-29 Steven Threadgold's study represents the first comprehensive engagement of Pierre Bourdieu's influential sociology with affect theory. With empirical research and examples from

sociology, it develops a theory of "Affective Affinities," deepening our understanding of how everyday moments contribute to the construction and remaking of social class and aspects of inequalities. It identifies new ways to consider the strengths and weaknesses of Bourdieusian principles and their interaction with new developments in social theory. This is a stimulating read for students, researchers and academics across studies in youth, education, labour markets, pop culture, media, consumption and taste.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: *Facing Fear* Michael Laffan, Max Weiss, 2012-10-14 Fear is ubiquitous but slippery. It has been defined as a purely biological reality, derided as an excuse for cowardice, attacked as a force for social control, and even denigrated as an unnatural condition that has no place in the disenchanted world of enlightened modernity. In these times of institutionalized insecurity and global terror, *Facing Fear* sheds light on the meaning, diversity, and dynamism of fear in multiple world-historical contexts, and demonstrates how fear universally binds us to particular presents but also to a broad spectrum of memories, stories, and states in the past. From the eighteenth-century Peruvian highlands and the California borderlands to the urban cityscapes of contemporary Russia and India, this book collectively explores the wide range of causes, experiences, and explanations of this protean emotion. The volume contributes to the thriving literature on the history of emotions and destabilizes narratives that have often understood fear in very specific linguistic, cultural, and geographical settings. Rather, by using a comparative, multidisciplinary framework, the book situates fear in more global terms, breaks new ground in the historical and cultural analysis of emotions, and sets out a new agenda for further research. In addition to the editors, the contributors are Alexander Etkind, Lisbeth Haas, Andreas Killen, David Lederer, Melani McAlister, Ronald Schechter, Marla Stone, Ravi Sundaram, and Charles Walker.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: *Writing Security* David Campbell, 1992

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: *Emotion in Education*, 2011-04-28 This edited book examines some of the current inquiry related to the study of emotions in educational contexts. There has been a notable increased interest in educational research on emotions. *Emotion in Education* represents some of the most exciting and current research on emotions and education, and has the potential to impact research in this area. This combination of variety, timeliness, potential for transformation of the field, and uniqueness make this a must-have resource for academics in the fields of education, educational psychology, emotion psychology, cultural psychology, sociology, and teacher education. The chapters have been written for scholars in the area, but authors also wrote with graduate students in mind. Therefore, the book is also be a great volume for graduate seminars. - Provides in-depth examination of emotions in educational contexts - Includes international roster of contributors who represent a variety of disciplines - Represents a number of different research approaches

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: *The Affective Turn* Patricia Ticineto Clough, Jean Halley, 2007-07-12 *DIV* Linking cultural studies and sociology, this collection explores the role of affect in the theorization of the social./div

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: *Ugly Feelings* Sianne Ngai, 2009-07-01 Envy, irritation, paranoia—in contrast to powerful and dynamic negative emotions like anger, these non-cathartic states of feeling are associated with situations in which action is blocked or suspended. In her examination of the cultural forms to which these affects give rise, Sianne Ngai suggests that these minor and more politically ambiguous feelings become all the more suited for diagnosing the character of late modernity. Along with her inquiry into the aesthetics of unprestigious negative affects such as irritation, envy, and disgust, Ngai examines a racialized affect called "animatedness," and a paradoxical synthesis of shock and boredom called "stuplimity." She explores the politically equivocal work of these affective concepts in the cultural contexts where they seem most at stake, from academic feminist debates to the Harlem Renaissance, from late-twentieth-century American poetry to Hollywood film and network television. Through readings of Herman Melville, Nella Larsen, Sigmund Freud, Alfred Hitchcock, Gertrude Stein, Ralph Ellison,

John Yau, and Bruce Andrews, among others, Ngai shows how art turns to ugly feelings as a site for interrogating its own suspended agency in the affirmative culture of a market society, where art is tolerated as essentially unthreatening. Ngai mobilizes the aesthetics of ugly feelings to investigate not only ideological and representational dilemmas in literature—with a particular focus on those inflected by gender and race—but also blind spots in contemporary literary and cultural criticism. Her work maps a major intersection of literary studies, media and cultural studies, feminist studies, and aesthetic theory.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: Engaging the Emotions in Spanish Culture and History Luisa Elena Delgado, Pura Fernandez, Jo Labanyi, 2016-06-20 Rather than being properties of the individual self, emotions are socially produced and deployed in specific cultural contexts, as this collection documents with unusual richness. All the essays show emotions to be a form of thought and knowledge, and a major component of social life—including in the nineteenth century, which attempted to relegate them to a feminine intimate sphere. The collection ranges across topics such as eighteenth-century sensibility, nineteenth-century concerns with the transmission of emotions, early twentieth-century cinematic affect, and the contemporary mobilization of political emotions including those regarding nonstate national identities. The complexities and effects of emotions are explored in a variety of forms—political rhetoric, literature, personal letters, medical writing, cinema, graphic art, soap opera, journalism, popular music, digital media—with attention paid to broader European and transatlantic implications.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: A Concise Companion to Feminist Theory Mary Eagleton, 2008-04-15 The Concise Companion to Feminist Theory introduces readers to the broad scope of feminist theory over the last 35 years. Introduces readers to the broad scope of feminist theory over the past 35 years. Guides students along the cutting edge of current feminist theory. Suitable for students and scholars of all fields touched by feminist thought. Covers an exceptionally broad range of disciplines, discourses and feminist positions. Organised around concepts rather than schools of feminism.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: The Documentary B. Smaill, 2009-11-30 Belinda Smaill proposes an original approach to documentary studies, examining how emotions such as pleasure, hope, pain, empathy, nostalgia or disgust are integral both to the representation of selfhood in documentary, and to the way documentaries circulate in the public sphere.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: Structures of Feeling Devika Sharma, Frederik Tygstrup, 2015-03-05 Raymond Williams coined the notion structure of feeling in the 1970s to facilitate a historical understanding of affective elements of consciousness and relationships. Since then, the need to understand emotions, moods and atmospheres as historical and social phenomena has only become more acute in an era of social networking, ubiquitous media and a public sphere permeated by commodities and advertisement culture. Concomitantly, affect studies have become one of the most thriving branches of contemporary humanities and social sciences. This volume explores the significance of the study of affectivity for already thriving fields of cultural analysis such as media studies, memory studies, gender studies and cultural studies at large. The volume is divided into four sections. The first part, Producing Affect, brings together contributions which explore some of the ways in which new media works to produce and intensify affectivity. The essays making up the second part, Affective Pasts, explore the significance of affect to the ways we remember, commemorate and in other ways get hold of things in our recent and not so recent past – or fail to do so. The essays engage the affective production of presence in contexts such as 9/11, the emotional culture of the eighteenth century, and literary auto-fiction. The third part, Affective Thinking, examines various concepts, theories, and forms of thinking not so much to show how the thinking in question may inform the field of affect studies but rather in order to draw attention to the way in which these modes of thinking are themselves already attuned to matters of affect. New social relations and ways of being in a networked world are the common themes of the essays in the final part of the volume, Circulating Affect.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: The Transmission of Affect Teresa Brennan,

2014-02-15 The idea that one can soak up someone else's depression or anxiety or sense the tension in a room is familiar. Indeed, phrases that capture this notion abound in the popular vernacular: negative energy, dumping, you could cut the tension with a knife. The Transmission of Affect deals with the belief that the emotions and energies of one person or group can be absorbed by or can enter directly into another. The ability to borrow or share states of mind, once historically and culturally assumed, is now pathologized, as Teresa Brennan shows in relation to affective transfer in psychiatric clinics and the prevalence of psychogenic illness in contemporary life. To neglect the mechanism by which affect is transmitted, the author claims, has serious consequences for science and medical research. Brennan's theory of affect is based on constant communication between individuals and their physical and social environments. Her important book details the relationships among affect, energy, and new maladies of the soul, including attention deficit disorder, chronic fatigue syndrome, codependency, and fibromyalgia.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: Affective Publics Zizi Papacharissi, 2015 Digital technologies network us but it is our stories that connect us to each other, making us feel close to some and distancing us from others. Affective Publics explores how storytelling practices on Twitter facilitate affective engagement for publics tuning into a current issue or event by employing three case studies: Arab Spring movements, various iterations of Occupy, and everyday casual political expressions as traced through the archives of trending topics on Twitter.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: Cruel Optimism Lauren Berlant, 2011-10-27 A relation of cruel optimism exists when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing. Offering bold new ways of conceiving the present, Lauren Berlant describes the cruel optimism that has prevailed since the 1980s, as the social-democratic promise of the postwar period in the United States and Europe has retracted. People have remained attached to unachievable fantasies of the good life—with its promises of upward mobility, job security, political and social equality, and durable intimacy—despite evidence that liberal-capitalist societies can no longer be counted on to provide opportunities for individuals to make their lives “add up to something.” Arguing that the historical present is perceived affectively before it is understood in any other way, Berlant traces affective and aesthetic responses to the dramas of adjustment that unfold amid talk of precarity, contingency, and crisis. She suggests that our stretched-out present is characterized by new modes of temporality, and she explains why trauma theory—with its focus on reactions to the exceptional event that shatters the ordinary—is not useful for understanding the ways that people adjust over time, once crisis itself has become ordinary. Cruel Optimism is a remarkable affective history of the present.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: The Power of Emotions in World Politics Simon Koschut, 2020-02-14 This book argues that the link between emotions and discourse provides a new and promising framework to theorize and empirically analyse power relationships in world politics. Examining the ways in which discourse evokes, reveals, and engages emotions, the expert contributors argue that emotions are not irrational forces but have a pattern to them that underpins social relations. However, these are also power relations and their articulation as socially constructed ways of feeling and expressing emotions represent a key force in either sustaining or challenging the social order. This volume goes beyond the emotions matter approach to offer specific ways to integrate the consideration of emotion into existing research. It offers a novel integration of emotion, discourse, and power and shows how emotion discourses establish, assert, challenge, or reinforce power and status difference. It will be particularly useful to university researchers, doctoral candidates, and advanced students engaged in scholarship on emotions and discourse analysis in International Relations.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: Happy Abortions Erica Millar, 2017-12-15 ‘A provocative and important book that every pro-choice advocate should read.’ Sinéad Kennedy, Coalition to Repeal the 8th Amendment When it comes to abortion, today’s liberal climate has produced a common sense that is both pro-choice and anti-abortion. The public are fed an unchanging version of what the abortion choice entails and how women experience it. While it would

prove highly unpopular to insist that all pregnant women should carry their pregnancy to term, the idea that abortion could or should be a happy experience for women is virtually unspeakable. In this careful and intelligent work, Erica Millar shows how the emotions of abortion are constructed in sharp contrast to the emotional position occupied by motherhood – the unassailable placeholder for women's happiness. Through an exposition of the cultural and political forces that continue to influence the decisions women make about their pregnancies – forces that are synonymous with the rhetoric of choice – Millar argues for a radical reinterpretation of women's freedom.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: *Affective Methodologies* Britta Timm Knudsen, 2016-02-10 The collection proposes inventive research strategies for the study of the affective and fluctuating dimensions of cultural life. It presents studies of nightclubs, YouTube memes, political provocations, heritage sites, blogging, education development, and haunting memories.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: *Palestine* Sumaya Awad, brian bean, 2020-12-01 This essay collection presents a compelling and insightful analysis of the Palestinian freedom movement from a socialist perspective. In *Palestine: A Socialist Introduction*, contributors examine a number of key aspects in the Palestinian struggle for liberation. These essays contextualize the situation in today's polarized world and offer a socialist perspective on how full liberation can be won. Through an internationalist, anti-imperialist lens, this book explores the links between the struggle for freedom in the United States and that in Palestine, and beyond. Contributors examine both the historical and contemporary trajectory of the Palestine solidarity movement in order to glean lessons for today's organizers. They argue that, in order to achieve justice in Palestine, the movement must take up the question of socialism regionally and internationally. Contributors include: Jihad Abusalim, Shireen Akram-Boshar, Omar Barghouti, Nada Elia, Toufic Haddad, Remi Kanazi, Annie Levin, Mostafa Omar, Khury Petersen-Smith, and Daphna Thier.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: *The Nature of Sympathy* Max Scheler, 2017-07-28 *The Nature of Sympathy* explores, at different levels, the social emotions of fellow-feeling, the sense of identity, love and hatred, and traces their relationship to one another and to the values with which they are associated. Scheler criticizes other writers, from Adam Smith to Freud, who have argued that the sympathetic emotions derive from self-interested feelings or instincts. He reviews the evaluations of love and sympathy current in different historical periods and in different social and religious environments, and concludes by outlining a theory of fellow-feeling as the primary source of our knowledge of one another. A prolific writer and a stimulating thinker, Max Scheler ranks second only to Husserl as a leading member of the German phenomenological school. Scheler's work lies mostly in the fields of ethics, politics, sociology, and religion. He looked to the emotions, believing them capable, in their own quality, of revealing the nature of the objects, and more especially the values, to which they are in principle directed.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: *The Psychoanalysis of Artificial Intelligence* Isabel Millar, 2021-04-13 This book examines the crucial role of psychoanalysis in understanding what AI means for us as speaking, sexed subjects. Drawing on Lacanian theory and recent clinical developments it explores what philosophy and critical theory of AI has hitherto neglected: enjoyment. Through the reconceptualization of Intelligence, the Artificial Object and the Sexual Abyss the book outlines the Sexbot as a figure who exists on the boundary of psychoanalysis and AI. Through this figure and the medium of film, the author subverts Kant's three Enlightenment questions and guides readers to transition from asking 'Does it think?' to 'Can it enjoy?' The book will appeal in particular to students and scholars of psychoanalysis, philosophy, film and media studies, critical theory, feminist theory and AI research.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: *Can Non-Europeans Think?* Hamid Dabashi, 2015-04-30 'In *Can Non-Europeans Think?* Dabashi takes his subtle but vigorous polemic to another level.' Pankaj Mishra What happens to thinkers who operate outside the European philosophical pedigree? In this powerfully honed polemic, Hamid Dabashi argues that they are invariably marginalised, patronised and misrepresented. Challenging, pugnacious and stylish, Can

Non-Europeans Think? forges a new perspective in postcolonial theory by examining how intellectual debate continues to reinforce a colonial regime of knowledge, albeit in a new guise. Based on years of scholarship and activism, this insightful collection of philosophical explorations is certain to unsettle and delight in equal measure.

sara ahmed the cultural politics of emotion: Emotions, Community, and Citizenship

Rebecca Kingston, Kiran Banerjee, James McKee, Yi-Chun Chien, Constantine C. Vassiliou,
2017-01-01 Emotions, Community, and Citizenship is a pioneering work that brings together scholars from an array of disciplines in order to challenge and unite the disciplinary divides in the study of emotions.

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