



STREAM

S11. Feeling Beside Affect: (Un)Translatable & Ineffable

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DESCRIPTION

In this stream, we invite attempts to refigure “affect” through unaccounted-for names, garments, or narrative formations, especially across cultural and linguistic contexts. With these attempts, a question begins to insist: To what extent is “affect” universal? What lies outside the frame of affect theory (or studies) in North American and European academies, yet might still disturb, inspire, or help us reimagine affect—or affect-like experiences?

This line of inquiry foregrounds the issue of translatability. Within the Chinese context, for instance, studies in the history of emotions often converge with “affect” in seeking to articulate, against the odds, modes of feeling and motility that resist habitual or institutional capture. Yet the term *qíng* (情)—with its wide range of connotations, from emotion in general to intense attachment, from private intention to the situation that invites response—eludes precise placement within the conceptual genealogy of English theory. Translatability, or rather the difficulty of translation, is not merely a linguistic problem. It inheres in cultural specificity and historically embodied structures of feeling shaped by social and political conditions.

By attending to (un)translatability, we make no claim to produce a coherent mapping or an autonomous genealogy that systematically stretches existing “affect” lexicons to other parts of the world, or to the fields and disciplines still at the periphery of our attention. Instead, we would like to lean towards the relationality of being Beside, following Eve Sedgwick’s proposal in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (2002). To be beside connotes a non-dualistic, if at times conflictual,

spatial positionality that allows divergent or supplementary conceptualizations and worldings to remain in juxtaposition without coercing resonance—in mutual solicitation, in allusive query and dance.

Our stream aims to recall an ethical appeal to respect the integrity of those ineffable, irreducible, and untranslatable “affect(s)” (De Chavez, 2025). What ineffable Methods, Atmospheres, Knowledges, and Energies animate our endeavors? For non-Western individuals and their affective experiences, how do we preserve, search for, and invent new vocabularies to articulate those affects that English cannot address? And finally, how might we cultivate ways of moving together without moving in unison, resonating obliquely between our distinct tonalities?

Possible topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Non-Western & indigenous affective experiences
- Uneven forms and problems of subjectivity
- Unnamed affects and affective experiences/energies/methods
- Ineffable knowledge and ways of knowing
- Alternative vocabularies of affect
- Multilingual and monolingual approaches to feeling
- Affect in medical, healing, and ritual traditions
- Literary, cinematic, musical exemplifications of the (un)translatability of feeling
- Visual art and the ineffable
- Body, vibrations, and sensational experiences
- Emotions and feelings in diverse cosmologies
- Distinct socio-political needs that call for affect
- Non-Western affective pedagogies
- Cultural specificities in the body's capacity to affect and be affected
- The question of mobilization in postcolonial and decolonial practices
- Politics and social activism in different geopolitical contexts