## Affect, Form and Matter in 17th-Century Literature

Newcastle University, 5-6 July 2027

Bringing affect theory back to its seventeenth-century literary and cultural contexts, this conference seeks to explore how this period's literature represents different affects; how reader responses are shaped by affect; and how both these negotiations reflect broader social or scientific developments of the period. A critical focus on affect can offer insights into the entanglement of body and mind, the sensible and the imagined, aesthetic practice, as well as the contexts and environments in which bodies move and interact. In the broadest sense, textual negotiations of affect point to what is at stake in reading.

A particular focus of the conference is on the aesthetics of affect: affect has been discussed as a formal feature of texts (Brinkema 2014; Brenkman 2020), but also in terms of texture or materiality (Sedgwick 2003), linguistic performativity (Riley 2005), or a combination thereof (Riedelsheimer 2024), but other (e.g. historical) perspectives are equally welcome. Papers might address the question of how seventeenth-century texts reflect or enact affect aesthetically through their form or materiality, and what specific cultural or historical challenges the seventeenth century poses in the negotiation of these textual affects. In short: how (that is, by what means) do seventeenth-century literary texts evoke, represent and negotiate feeling? Possible topics for papers on seventeenth-century literature include, but are not restricted to, affect(s) and:

- the analysis and further theorisation of the early modern "materialization of the passions" (Robinson 2020: 221).
- new materialist approaches to (representations of) affect.
- new formalist approaches to the affective affordances of form and genre.
- aesthetics: versification, metaphoricity, etc.
- poetic forms and genres, including influences of continental European poetic traditions.
- the role of affect in political and/or scientific discourse.
- the English Civil War.
- affects and the senses / the sensory politics of affect.
- (intersections of) gender, race, or class.
- religion.
- the economy / practices of labour.
- ecology and the environment.
- early modern rhetorical theory and practice (e.g. *energeia* or *enargeia*) or poetics.
- the history and materiality of the book and printing.
- other art forms (music, painting, sculpture, dance, …).

**Keynote Lectures:** Benedict S. Robinson (Stony Brook University) and Elizabeth Scott-Baumann (King's College London)

**Abstracts**: Abstracts (max. 300 words) for 20-minute presentations should be accompanied by a short biographical note and sent to martin.riedelsheimer@newcastle.ac.uk.

**Deadline:** 15 January 2027

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