

Reading for Affect – a Methodological Proposal for Analyzing Affective Dynamics in Discourse

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Introduction

How are literary texts, media reports, or political commentaries involved in constituting social reality? How are they implicated in the drawing of boundaries, in the construction of communal bonds, or in the formation of antagonistic social collectives? And what is the role of affect and emotion – vis-à-vis calm deliberation and rational thought – in these processes? Understanding the intertwining of language, emotion, and affect is a notoriously difficult task, as decades of research in the social and behavioral sciences, linguistics, and literary studies have shown.¹ Ever since Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, scholars have been intrigued by the question of the emotional properties and consequences not only of spoken but also of written language. This prolonged interest in how language and emotion go together is probably fueled by the conviction that the two are somewhat strange bedfellows, given that the former is thought of as a system of formal syntactic rules coordinating the use of symbols, whereas the latter is supposed to be an unpredictable idiosyncratic and somatic mode of engaging with the world.

Today, many endeavors in the humanities and the social sciences to understand how language and emotion are intertwined rely on theories and methodologies of discourse. Although some strands of discourse analysis have for a long time paid close attention to the importance of emotion, particularly those in the tradition of linguistic ethnography and conversation analysis, others have only partially accounted for this dimension, especially works taking a Foucauldian stance towards discourse. This latter tradition has rather eschewed emotions and affect presumably because both are often conceived of as 'individual' or 'subjective' phenomena that are hard to reconcile with an understanding of discourse as a system of utterances that follows certain historically grounded rules of the (re)production of knowledge (Foucault 2002/1969).

In this chapter, we suggest that the concept of *affect* is a promising candidate to reconcile this tension between 'the discursive' and 'the bodily subjective'. We do not propose a conceptual loophole for the fundamental body/discourse problem (Butler 1989) nor develop concrete methods for analyzing the potential linkage between the discursive and the realm of bodily experience. Rather, we suggest a theoretical and methodological turn that moves away from the idea that – for the time being – we can come to terms with the actual 'effects' of discourse on how subjects 'actually' feel. Instead of relying on feelings and emotions in the traditional phenomenological understanding of these terms (i.e., feelings as conscious phenomenal experiences of human individuals), the concept of *affect*, as developed in cultural studies, may offer a valuable theoretical and methodological perspective for a novel take on the intertwining of emotion, language, and discourse. In particular, the understanding of *bodies* implied in the concept of affect promises to overcome some of the dividing lines in research on emotions and discourse.

In what follows, we first provide a very brief review of different strands of research on the links between discourse and emotion, including a review of how different affect theories have conceptualized the potential intertwining of affect and language. In a second step, we will elaborate on our methodological propositions that involve the notions of ‘discourse bodies’ and ‘reading for affect’ as an analytical perspective for the close reading and interpretation of text. In a third part, we will illustrate this approach using concrete examples from our own research on the role of affect and emotion in debates over feelings of religious belonging, moral injury, and hate speech.

1. Emotions and Discourse

Approaches to emotion and discourse in the social sciences can be roughly categorized along two lines. First, linguistic and ethnographic approaches, often in a pragmatist tradition, conceive of discourse predominantly as an interaction order that emerges in social situations and interactions, focusing on the ‘talk’ rather than the ‘text’ part of discourse (see Angermüller 2001). Here, the focus often is on the different ways in which emotions are expressed, communicated, and become manifest in social interactions through various modalities, for instance speech, gestures, or body postures, and thus serve as an infrastructure of discourse and meaning making (e.g., Potter 2012; Ruusuvuori 2012). Other approaches in this tradition are more specifically concerned with how people talk *about* emotions and what this talk reveals about emotions and their place in discourse and society. These views consider emotions to be a semantic domain and argue that language always classifies and categorizes emotional experience such that the emotion words used to signify and analyze emotional experience are always bound to culture, either in a representationist (e.g., Wierzbicka 1999) or ontological (e.g., Bamberg 1997) sense (see Besnier 1990 for an overview).

Second, and contrary to these perspectives that understand discourse mainly as “language in use”, emotions frequently have been part of discourse analyses in a post-structural, Foucauldian tradition. These approaches conceive of discourse as a system of utterances that produces knowledge and meaning and thus tend to focus more on encompassing political ideologies, historically circumscribed ways of constituting knowledge, and the social practices, subjectivities, and power relations that this entails. Research in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which is rooted in linguistics and inspired by Althusser’s theory of ideology, Bakhtin’s genre theory, and critical theory of the Frankfurt School (Titscher et al. 2000, p. 144), has looked at how emotions are connected to social problems, ideologies, and power relations and how they become part of the “linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures” (ibid., p. 146; cf. Altheide 2002, Furedi 1997, Koschut et al. 2017). Matouschek & Wodak (1995), for instance, have shown how the public discourse on refugees and

immigration in Austria in the 1990s creates ‘we-groups’ and operates on the attribution or rejection of guilt. These latter approaches assume that ‘emotional’ or ‘emotionalizing’ discourse is essential for subjectivation and the ways in which social reality and subject positions are constructed. Along similar lines William Reddy has suggested the concept of ‘emotives’ as specific forms of speech acts that do not simply have emotions as referents but are performatives that ‘do things to the world’. “Emotives are themselves instruments for directly changing, building, hiding, intensifying emotions” (Reddy 2001, p. 105).

This second line of inquiry, in particular, faces the (almost classical) challenge of conceptually bridging the realm of language and text on the one hand, and subjective emotional experience involving human bodies on the other hand. For example, what consequences does the use of an ‘emotionalizing’ language or the articulation of certain emotion words actually have for the subjective feelings and emotional experience of an audience? Although assumptions concerning these ‘extra-discursive’ effects – which are in-line with Foucault’s idea of the material dimension of discourse – can be frequently found in the literature on discourse and emotion, the social processes involved in this translation usually remain opaque and it is as of yet unclear how they can be conceptualized, let alone investigated empirically (see Butler 1989 and Wrana & Langer 2007 for discussions).

The Affective Turn

Crossing the fuzzy borders from the social sciences to the humanities brings to attention a cluster of alternative approaches to discourse and emotion that is much less interested in feelings and subjective emotional experience, but rather understands affects and emotions as deeply imbricating the public sphere. Lauren Berlant (1997, 2011), Ann Cvetkovitch (2003, 2012) and Eve K. Sedgwick (2003), for example, have investigated emotions as a mode of heteronormative power showing how emotionality has been attributed to specific subject positions rather than others. This line of thought aims at developing a critique of the affectivity and emotionality of the public sphere, exposing the ways in which emotions contribute to creating hierarchical relationalities, but also valuing them as being conducive to emancipation and social change (Bargetz 2015).

These endeavors are firmly anchored in the field of the “affect studies” as an outcome of what many call the “affective turn” in the humanities and in cultural studies (Clough & Halley 2007). Some of the first works in this field originated as a response to the theoretical fatigue engendered by poststructuralist thinking and its strong emphasis on discourse in processes of subjectivation (Blackman et al. 2008). To counter this bias in attempts to bridge the divide between discourse and text, scholars have increasingly taken interest in more body-centered, sometimes even psychological and physiological frameworks of

analysis. Most prominently, Sedgwick & Frank (1995) incorporated the concept of affect – as developed by psychologist Silvan Tomkins – into cultural studies to reinvigorate the relevance of the body and biology against an overemphasis on language. The concept of affect was (re)discovered from the natural and psychological sciences as a means to emphasize the bodily components of becoming – designed to describe how “the impulses, sensations, expectations, daydreams, encounters and habits of relating” felt, in a state of “potentiality and resonance that comes before representation” (Stewart 2007, p. 2).

Aiming at a strict break with discourse, some approaches in affect theory locate affect strictly outside the realm of language. Affect (in singular) – distinct from the concepts of feelings and emotions which are conceived of as cultural expressions/manifestations and follow a certain ‘social script’ – is taken to describe dimensions of the body that cannot be apprehended by language. By the most fervent proponents of this strand of theorizing, e.g. in the works of Brian Massumi, affect is discussed as a phenomenon which is not linked to thought let alone language or discourse. For Massumi, affect is a pre-discursive and even pre-cognitive realm of pure intensity, of relating objects to one another without resorting to discourse or any other means of signification (Massumi 1995, 2002). In reinterpreting Baruch de Spinoza’s understanding of affect as depicted by Deleuze (1990/1968) and combining it with findings of modern neuroscience, Massumi makes it the cornerstone of an ontological theory of affect, thereby marking the starting point for a school of affect theorists interested in relationships between human and non-human agents beyond a liberal theory of subjectivity (Schaefer 2015, p. 19).

Attempts at locating affect solely in the realm of intensity have, however, been thoroughly criticized for their vagueness and untenability (Hemmings 2005; Leys 2011). Moreover, critics have expounded the idea of a temporal split between affect and discourse, where affect is in some sense supposed to precede language (Wetherell 2012, 2013). To overcome these conceptual and methodological impasses, others have suggested to look at affect and discourse as tightly interwoven entities. In the introduction to her collection of essays *Senses of the Subject*, Judith Butler (2015) claims that affect is not to be conceived of in opposition to discourse, but as an important condition for a discursive subject to come into existence. Thus, there is no discourse without the basis of affectivity as “I am already affected before I can say ‘I’ and [...] I have to be affected to say ‘I’ at all” (Butler 2015, p. 2). Butler also sees the methodological problem of the hierarchical temporal order pointed out by Wetherell (2013) and others: “if I say that I am already affected before I can say ‘I’, I am speaking much later than the process I seek to describe” (Butler 2015, p. 2). In other words: It seems impossible to address affect at the origin of discourse in a direct way as it always takes place in a realm of non-discursivity, which remains inaccessible to discursive means. Butler stresses, however, that “remaining silent on such matters” given this problem is not the only option available. Importantly, she proposes to shift attention to the processual nature of affectivity that never ceases throughout a subject’s lifetime as “the bodily

dimension of signification does not fall away as talking begins” (ibid., p. 15), since indeed “affect and cognition are never fully separable – if for no other reason than that thought is itself a body, embodied” (Gregg & Seigworth 2009, p. 2). Considering affect within discourse, according to Butler, we should “accept this belatedness and proceed in a narrative fashion that marks the paradoxical condition of trying to relate something about my formation that is prior to my own narrative capacity” (Butler 2015, p. 2). Affect might therefore be accessible through a textual dynamic referring to bodily aspects of language and discourse.

Importantly, affect in these works is notably different from the concept of emotion as it is used in most theories in the social and behavioral sciences. One important aspect of this distinction is the different ontological status of affect and emotion that most scholars in affect studies assume. While emotions are often conceived of as – on the one hand – belonging to the realm of a person’s subjective phenomenal experience and – on the other hand – as concepts which have acquired a rather fixed and culturally determined meaning, affect relies on a relational ontology following a Spinozian logic of appearing in between bodies and neither belonging to one certain body nor being reducible to a fixed set of attributes. Affect, in this sense, is a dynamic encounter between entities which only appear as bodies through this encounter (Slaby 2016, 2017; von Scheve 2018).

How can this understanding of affect satisfy an interest in the links between emotion and discourse? How can it inform – beyond the realm of signification and representation – the analysis of literary texts, media reports, or political commentaries in their involvement in the constitution of social reality? And how can affect contribute to comprehending the drawing of boundaries, the construction of communal bonds, or in the formation of antagonistic social groups through language and discourse? We suggest that two facets of affect are particularly conducive to addressing these questions: its *relational* and *bodily* dynamics. In a Foucauldian perspective, discourse itself is a system of relations between linguistic utterances, and these utterances in themselves are not void of materiality, they have a bodily dimension. Analytically capitalizing on affective dynamics in the realm of discourse thus means to concentrate on the relational couplings between bodies of various sorts (see below) which are constituted through and within discourse. While discourse itself does make use of the conceptual vocabulary of discrete emotions (e.g., anger, fear, shame, happiness) and the ascription of feelings to individuals or social groups, the lens of affect enables us to focus on the relational dynamics and bodily aspects related to these discursive phenomena – without the need to make vague and empirically hard to establish assumptions regarding the consequences of these ascriptions for individuals’ subjective experiences.

2. Discourse Bodies and Reading for Affect

The interrelatedness of affect and discourse, as elaborated by Butler and others, becomes evident in a fundamental concept of affect studies, namely their concept of the body. Drawing on Donna Haraway and echoing ideas of the New Materialism in sociology and other disciplines (Latour 2005), Lisa Blackman (2012) argues that the body can no longer be understood to be of flesh and blood and that it is no longer the sole natural material carrier of social processes. Rather, the concept of body within affect studies is extended to “species bodies, psychic bodies, machinic bodies, vitalist bodies, and other-worldly bodies. Bodies do not have clear boundaries anymore, what defines bodies is their capacity to affect and be affected” (Blackman 2012, p. X). For the methodological approach we seek to develop here, we suggest using such a concept of the body that does not distinguish between registers of biology, physiology, and discursive representations, but rather reflects a ‘flat’ ontology (Latour 2005). We thus use the term ‘discourse bodies’ to refer to the various transpersonal entities within discourse that are defined by their relations to other entities, either material or representational/ideational. As we will elaborate in the following section, discourse bodies surface in language, for example, i.e. when objects or ideas are ascribed qualities of (human) bodies, such as the capacity for feeling and emotion (as in a ‘feeling nation’). Yet, they also emerge in the materiality of discourse itself, in the ink of printed letters, the paper and the signposts, or the glare of a tablet’s screen.

To identify these bodily relationalities in text, we suggest an approach we call *Reading for Affect*, a term that has, with partly different scopes, also been used by Christoffer Kolvraa (2015) and by Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2007). In defining the elements of *Reading for Affect*, we take inspiration from Sara Ahmed, who presents a fruitful way for analyzing the emergence of relational bodies in discourse. With this, her approach shows a firm tendency towards affect studies, although in her earlier works, she uses the terms ‘affects’ and ‘emotions’ interchangeably. Talking about ‘emotions’, Ahmed does not center on the experiential and subjective realm of feeling, but instead capitalizes on affective dynamics for which emotion words and the (discursive) ascription of feelings play a vital role. Our understanding of Ahmed’s methodological conjecture is that she focuses, analytically, on the use of an emotion-bound vocabulary in order to map the relational affective dynamics in which bodies are enmeshed.

Ahmed claims that emotions “work to align some subjects with some others and against other others” and shows how these alignments, circulating “between bodies and signs”, “create the very effect of the surfaces or boundaries of bodies and worlds” (Ahmed 2004a, p. 117). In her elaborations on right-wing and conservative rhetoric – e.g. of the Aryan Nation (Ahmed 2004a), British nationalist parties (Ahmed 2004b), or British Prime Minister David Cameron (Ahmed 2014) –, she shows in which ways the use of emotion words plays a crucial role in constructing and portraying subjects and groups and in aligning them with or against each other, for instance based on a continuum of love and hate or an economy of fear. Essential to her analysis of right-wing politics is the intentional object of ascribed emotions that

comes into play in a specific rhetoric: by showing its affection for a *nation*, Ahmed shows, nationalist speech aims at producing “affect aliens”, namely subjects not belonging to the specific community as they are said to lack the feelings that constitute it (Ahmed 2014, p. 13). Ahmed’s reading of (nationalist) political speeches and propaganda thus centers on one crucial dimension of affect in discourse: its potential to align subjects and to provide a framework of alignment that is not so much grounded in conceptual and propositional knowledge, but rather in the registers of affecting and being affected. What seems particularly valuable for the question tackled here is Ahmed’s insistence on the relevance of affect for the formation of the very “skin” of subjects and her underlining the importance of tracing the implications of the uses of emotion words for issues of power (e.g. in terms of nationalism or racism). In this sense, and regarding the relationality of affect, Ahmed specifically points out the group dynamics that are presumably put into action through affective speech. Her understanding of these kinds of alignments thus resonates well with our notion of discourse bodies, although we would even more strongly account for the material side of discourse itself, as we will show in the following.

Within the field of affect studies, the idea of pursuing a certain *Reading* of text has been suggested by Sedgwick (2003). She argues that poststructuralist approaches to discourse have too much focused on subjectivation as subjugation. Instead, she proposes a different approach – a different reading – determined less by scholars’ preexisting hypotheses, concerns, and critical stances (which she dubs “paranoid”), but instead a reading that aims at the reconstruction of a sustainable life, opening space for the unexpected and agency (which she dubs “reparative”; see Love 2010 for a summary and discussion). Needless to say, ~~†~~this demand for openness and impartiality in encountering text reflects decades of a long time’s work on qualitative research methods in the social sciences, including the analysis of discourse (see e.g. Diaz-Bone et al. 2007; Keller 2005). *Reading for Affect* embraces the idea of taking a specific, if well informed perspective on text, one that foregrounds affective phenomena as a hermeneutic lens, capitalizing on affect and emotion as sensitizing concepts in the interpretation of discourse.

3. Discursive Bodies in Media Coverage of the *Charlie Hebdo* Attacks

Reading for Affect traces emotion words and their genealogies, metaphors and analogies involving bodies or a bodily becoming, vocabulary indicating subjective feelings and experiences, and the materiality of discourse itself to lay open how the affective relations between different bodies are established through language. This part is devoted to illustrating different dimensions on which the methodological approach of *Reading for Affect* can be translated into a heuristic for the analysis of textual discourse. We capitalize on three such dimensions: the attribution of emotion words to specific actors, material, or ideational entities; linguistic collectivization, i.e. social collectives being portrayed in their agentic and bodily qualities; and the materiality of discourse itself. For illustrative purposes, we

will use the public debates that ensued after the terrorist attack on the satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* in January 2015, in which ten members of the newspapers' editorial team and two police officers were killed. The examples cited here are taken from an ongoing research project, focusing on public discourse in Germany in particular. English translations from the German texts are our own.²

Ascribing Emotions

In line with Ahmed's approach, one dimension of analysis is concerned with identifying to whom feeling and emotions are ascribed in discourse and how bodies come into existence through these ascriptions. The underlying assumption is that portraying a group, an individual, an idea, or an object in the registers of affect contributes to its bodily creation and perception. Abstract social entities, such as social categories, communities, groups or nation states, which are ascribed feelings or affective capacities are, in a sense, discursively constructed bodies.

This ascription is often made to mark a contrast with Western tradition, being skeptical about affectivity and emotions within a post-enlightenment discourse (Hirschkind 2011). On the other hand, if there is a social entity *feeling* the same way, this is framed as a connection much deeper than any attachment based on rational *thought*. Depending on whose feelings are at stake in a certain situation, ascribing emotions can thus have different effects ranging from the construction of a deeply felt solidarity up to the ultimate exclusion of certain entities on the grounds of their feelings (which are deemed inappropriate). The ascription of feelings and emotions to groups, collectives or simply to arbitrary social categories thus entails the affect-based relational construction of what we call *discourse bodies*.

In this vein, the emergence of a collective *WE* within the discursive (and performative) reactions to the attack on *Charlie Hebdo* becomes visible: "We were all targeted by this attack" (Nelles, *Spiegel Online*, 7 January 2015), "We mourn" (Gürgen & Schulz, *taz*, 14 January 2015), "We have to defend ourselves" (Heinen, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 9 January 2015). This collective body arising within the reactions after the attack becomes manifest predominantly through its ascribed emotional state. Shocked by the blatant offense of its public norms, mourning the victims, and at the same time raging against such provocative violation of its foundational values – democracy and freedom. The collective *WE* hence emerges through these ascriptions of bodily characteristics, for instance semantics of vulnerability and injury. An article in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* describes the "nation" as "heart-wounded" (Leyendecker, 8 January 2015), and the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* as "hit at the heart" (Halterm, 9 January 2015). These visceral registers constitute the discourse body of the *WE*.

But not only the *WE* is ascribed feelings and emotions in these debates, but also ‘Muslims’ as a social category are ‘emotionalized’ in specific ways. In discussions around the legitimacy of the Mohamed cartoons – a question directly tied to *Charlie Hebdo*, as the magazine reprinted the infamous cartoons first published in the Danish *Jyllands Posten* in 2006 –, Muslims are portrayed as light-tempered, easily provoked, angry and aggressive. In this vein, articles report on the massive violent reactions of “Muslims” “in Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Gaza and Yemen” (anon., *Zeit*, 18 January 2015), following the first publication of *Charlie Hebdo* after the attack which had a caricature of the prophet as front cover (e.g. Prantl, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 19 January 2015). Frequently, articles also refer to the figure of “the fanatics” in order to convey the unpredictable aggressiveness of Muslims (e.g. Salloum, *Spiegel*, 8 January 2015; Kister, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 9 January 2015). Images and metaphors, such as “the fanatics”, have repeatedly been used to create affectively charged bodies seemingly alien to Western cultural norms and affect-regimes.

Relating Discourse Bodies

Emotions that are ascribed to collectivities like the *WE* or ‘the Muslims’ enact certain attractions and repulsions between bodies – they can be conceived of as the source of an affective dynamic. These affective constellations offer positions or affective subjectivities bodies become attached to by ‘feeling the emotions’ and hence by entering a certain subject-object-arrangement. Discourse thus provides affective subject positions that can be embodied by subjects.

One of the dominant affective relations through which the *WE* becomes visible is the frequent articulation of fear in public discourse. One dominant concern is that people could refrain from exercising their right to freedom of speech, scared by the drastic consequences their speech might engender. “Many people are scared to express their opinion or to criticize religion after this attack”, the weekly *Der Spiegel* cites a French protester (Salloum, 8 January 2015). Although we can only speculate that the protester is referring to Islam in particular and potential reprisals to blasphemy, other articles more clearly relate fear to a violent interpretation of Islam, invading the ‘European body’ from the outside. Other articles warn of a danger from ‘within’. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* cites security experts who contend that the real danger for Europe is the potential radicalization of European Muslim youth (Leyendecker, 8 January 2015). In the days following the attack, and in particular in connection to the so-called ‘marches republicaines’ – huge mobilizations and protests in various European cities in solidarity with the victims – headlines commented that Europeans had proven their fearlessness. “Europe is united in solidarity – we don’t have fear”, reads the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*’s coverage of the marches (Kohler, 8 January 2015). “Calmly, but strongly, in many countries of the world people have affirmed the right of journalists and cartoonists to express their opinion – without having to fear the consequences. [...] The terrorists’ intention to spread fear has failed” (Ulrich, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*,

10/11 January 2015). Furthermore, fear after the attack is problematized as potentially exploitable by politicians who aim to justify excessive restrictions on individual freedom in the fight against terrorism (Kurz, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 12 January 2015).

Engaging emotionally in this collective of fear ensures becoming part of the *WE*. The affective subjectivity reflected by this overwhelming *WE* of solidarity is one that is affectively determined by fearing the change of ‘our’ Western societies through the brutal acts of terrorism committed by others – the non-*WE*, namely Islamist terrorists. Capitalizing on the emotion of fear within the discourse surrounding the attacks promotes an affectively charged construction of a subject position that gives way to identification on an affective basis and, with this, arranges a process of discursive in- and exclusion.

A second emotional relation that defines the *WE* is that of love: for freedom, liberal values and freedom of speech. This becomes most evident in pleas for defense and solidarity for such values as in the following excerpt: “The cruel assassinations in Paris were a well-targeted attack on the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* and its journalists. At the same time, it was an attack on the Western world, on the foundations and values of an open society [...]. Let’s defend ourselves, let’s continue to insist on a plurality of opinions and the freedom to express them.” (Heinen, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 9 January 2015). Through love, freedom of speech becomes an object of alignment and attachment. The positive and negative identification – with what is loved and feared – promotes the emergence of a collective *WE* that only comes into being and persists as affected by the continuous singular modalities of love and fear, yet it can never be fully taken – or inhabited – by the sum of singular human bodies.

Since freedom of speech figures as an “object of alignment”, as Sara Ahmed terms it, Muslims can become part of the *WE* when they demonstrate their love for freedom of speech. If Muslims want to be integrated into the *WE*, if they do not want to be *feared* but *loved* by the *WE*, they have to affectively confirm their respect for freedom of speech and actively turn against those who “hate” freedom, thus joining the ranks of a collective “united against the fanatics” (Kister, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 9 January 2015). Emphasizing not so much the bodily but rather the cultural components of this affection, this can be interpreted as the demand for adopting a Western “emotion repertoire” (von Poser, Ta & Hahn 2018) and to subject the self under a specific “emotion regime” (Reddy 2001). Ahmed discusses the relationality in regard to the case of “multicultural love” (cf. Ahmed 2004b, p. 122; Ahmed 2014, p. 23). In multicultural settings, Ahmed argues, love allows for an affective dynamic that works through alignment and exclusion simultaneously. The love for those who follow the ideal in a way requires the exclusion of those who have not achieved it. In this vein, many Muslim organizations underline their

attachment to values like freedom of speech and reach out to the “silent majority” to declare their fidelity to such values (e.g. J.A., *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 24 January 2015; Babayigit, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 15 January 2015). To belong to the *WE* emerging after January 7, 2015, one has to be emotionally committed to freedom of speech, and thus embody the affective subject positions offered by hegemonic discourse.

Bodies in- and outside texts

A third dimension of affectivity which can be analyzed regarding discourse is bound to the materiality of discourse itself – its language and rhetoric and the materiality it finds in forms transcending the merely textual sphere and becoming part of translinguistic phenomena within the social.

One can conceive of the materiality of the slogan “Je suis Charlie” as part of the body of the *WE*, for instance on T-shirts, posters, slogans on buildings, as transmitted through social media profiles or as a full-page insert to Germany’s bestselling newspaper *Bild* etc. The sentence “Je suis Charlie” gains much of its power through being disseminated via a huge variety of channels and media, thus becoming part of the everyday and transforming the social sphere. In its omnipresence, “Je suis Charlie” connects a multitude of different objects – bodies in Blackman’s sense – and thus is transformed into a powerful measure to create an overarching affective arrangement (Slaby, Mühlhoff & Wüschner 2017) binding other bodies and transforming affective relations within society. “Je suis Charlie” thus is no longer only a (discursive) slogan, but through its widespread use through different modalities gains a materiality without which, we argue, its overwhelming effects could not be the same. This diverse materiality opens up opportunities to affect individuals and groups on different levels and through different channels. This phenomenon of the bodily in/through discourse leads us to label arrangements like these as ‘discourse bodies’, highlighting their discursive origins as well as their bodily-material components.

In a less extensive sense – directed at the analysis of specific fragments of a discourse –, talking of the ‘discourse body’ may mean to address the aspect of discourse’s materiality more strictly, i.e. relating to the concrete language material used in a certain discourse. With Petra Gehring (2007), we can here speak of the “bodily power of language”, a power she underlines stating that language cannot be seen as the other of the body, but that language itself is a bodily phenomenon (cf. Gehring 2007, p. 213). While Gehring concentrates on acts of “*deadly* rage”, i.e. the most massive linguistic attack possible, we argue that the bodily materiality she phenomenologically analyzes in these cases can also be found in less strong utterances (in a less powerful way). Even in cases in which it is not a “weapon”, language itself still is a “physical thing”, as “on the paths of language, bodies collide physically” (Gehring 2007, p. 219, 221, our translation). Gehring, following up on Merleau-Ponty (1964), points to the necessity of

including the bodily, material side of language into considerations on discourse, a point in which we follow her and which can be addressed through considering discourse a body in its own right. While Gehring continues her argument in a phenomenological realm considering scenes of individuals confronting each other verbally (and bodily) in speech acts, she also hints to the necessity of analyzing (not necessarily spoken) discourse in the same vein. Our concept of ‘discourse bodies’ concentrates on the materiality of language here, considering the ways the linguistic material is formed and distributed within discourse. This makes aspects of metaphor, rhetoric, onomatopoeia and choice of vocabulary the realm in which this part of *Reading for Affect* proceeds.

In the debate analyzed here, an opinion piece published by the well-known German women’s rights activist Alice Schwarzer in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (25 January 2015) is particularly informative. Especially her use of metaphor is striking in this regard. Her subject is the problem of drawing a “demarcation line between Islam and Islamism” which German chancellor Angela Merkel is cited in seeing at the point “where religion is used to legitimate violence”. Schwarzer writes: “Violence is only the tip of the iceberg of politicized Islam, i.e. Islamism. [...] Inciting hate towards others is the seed of violence. This seed shoots, the Kalashnikov in hand.” In combining the naturalistic metaphor of the shooting seed with the picture of the iceberg of Islamism hiding below sea level, Schwarzer’s text incites feelings of fear without naming this emotion. In the following, she criticizes Islamism for “dehumanizing the other” and thus forming the base for hate – while dehumanizing Muslim subjects herself by using the metaphors depicted. A central thread of her text is to posit a continuum between liberal Muslims and Jihadists which becomes clear in the metaphors used – while on an argumentative level, she underscores the importance of differentiating between Islam and Islamism. Contrary to her argument, she then ends with the demand to end every form of “misleading tolerance” and stop being too considerate with religious minorities – a conclusion clearly at odds with her argument, but in line with the assumption of a continuity between Islam and Islamism suggested by the metaphors employed. The language material used in this case delivers its own story – a way to convey a message separate from the line of thought given in the argumentative parts of her text.

While metaphor is arguably one of the more covert forms in which affectivity becomes tangible in discourse, forms of hyperbole and linguistic excess are more clearly visible. Most explicitly, tabloid papers make use of these affectively charged techniques as can be seen in the German *Bild* which underlined the totality of its solidarity with the “Je suis Charlie”-movement by dedicating the entire last page of its paper to the slogan, printed white on black, on January 8, 2015, and following-up on this by putting online a picture of the paper’s staff unanimously holding up this page in a depiction of the editorial office on the day’s afternoon (anon., *Bild*, 8 January 2015). Mass-solidarity is thus depicted through a massive accumulation of the slogan within the paper. On the other hand, *Bild* uses shocking

and hyperbolic headlines to strongly underline the threat Islamism poses to European societies, enhancing the messages given by the big size of the letters used for the paper's headlines. For example, *Bild* asks "Is there a whole terror network raging in Paris?" on January 9 (anon., *Bild*, 9 January 2015b), after stating a day before that "This is war – real war" in quoting French newspaper *Le Figaro* (Hempel, & Müller Thederan, *Bild*, 8 January 2015). And hyperbole is also used in depicting the movement of "Je suis Charlie", when *Bild* writes of "Limitless solidarity" (anon., *Bild*, 9 January 2015a) or delivers a count of "Je suis Charlie" trending on Twitter: "Five million times #JeSuisCharlie" (anon., *Bild*, 10 January 2015) – and also when it registers the economic value of "Je suis Charlie" as a brand, writing on "The million-Euro-business of 'Je suis Charlie'" (anon., *Bild*, 14 January 2015). Here, textual measures of enhancing affectivity materially meet with the transtextual realm in which the phenomenon "Je suis Charlie" gains its power.

3. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have presented an interdisciplinary approach to analyzing the affective dynamics of discourse. Combining methodological approaches from the social sciences and the humanities, in particular literary studies, this approach seeks to overcome the conceptual divide present in many theories of affect between body and affect, on the one hand, and language and discourse on the other hand. We question those positions in the literature that prioritize material bodies over language and discourse – or vice versa –, and instead argue to analyze the coincidence of bodies and language as shows in the affective arrangements in discourse and society. Many existing approaches to discourse analysis that focus on emotions, in particular those in a Foucauldian tradition, struggle with implicit assumptions on the links between discourse and the subjective emotional experience of an audience. Our methodological proposal of *Reading for Affect* seeks to transcend questions related to personal or collective feelings as qualities of the 'inner life' of human individuals.

Regarding the question of how media reports and political commentaries are involved in constituting social reality and how they are implicated in the drawing of boundaries and the formation of (antagonistic) social collectives, we suggest to look at the relational affective dynamics between discursive enunciations and the discourse bodies that emerge from the enunciations. Taking the vivid debates over freedom of speech and religious sensibilities after the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks as an example, the methodological approach of *Reading for Affect* allows to describe how these bodies are discursively constructed, which possibilities they offer an audience to align with distinct social collectives, and in which material ways they present themselves *as* bodies.

Reading for Affect proposes to coalesce affect theory and discourse analysis by opening up the latter to questions of affectivity, materiality, and the linguistic creation of social bodies. In this, it seems promising for other fields of research as well: Considering, for example, that a Foucauldian (discourse analytical) theory of discipline or of governmentality also relates to bodies but is not sufficiently able to consider these aspects without integrating affective elements. Any analysis of power, we argue, should consider affects and emotions as well as the dynamics they create, which can be accomplished by incorporating bodily and affective characteristics of discourse into its analysis. Moreover, the proposed approach gives way to a perspective on affect studies that is able to come to terms with the textual embedding and relevance of affectivity beyond ideas of the impossibility to grasp affectivity at all. *Reading for Affect* proposes a methodology for working with affect in discourse, something many positions in the field, which postulate the entanglements between affect and discourse more abstractly, still lack or actively oppose.

Reading for Affect thus proposes to approach text through a specific lens or perspective that is informed by affect theories and to use their concepts as sensitizing concepts in the analysis and interpretation of language and discourse. Our proposal is not limited to specific techniques of analysis as they are used in the social sciences and humanities and can, in principle, be combined with established analytical procedures, such as close readings, dispositive analysis, or critical discourse analysis.

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2

Our analysis is based on a sample of approximately 70 newspaper articles published during the two weeks after the attack. For the purpose of our case study, it seemed apt to concentrate on central print outlets of the German speaking market, namely the daily newspapers *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, *Tageszeitung* and *Tagesspiegel* as well as the weeklies *Zeit* and *Spiegel*, as these media stand for a hegemonic thread of discourse which is also mirrored in other news coverage. As it is clear in this case that these parts of mass media do not represent the whole of the debate, in some parts of the case study we complement this data set through other materials for illustrative purposes.