

Entanglement, Emotion and the Voice of the Text

Maria Stuart

• Entanglement

- ‘We do not, as scholars from different disciplines, bring together our objects and practices to one another through a kind of free-trade agreement; rather we re-enter a long history of binding, tangling and cutting [across disciplines/practice] within which the current moves towards integration are much more weighted than they might first seem.’

- (Des Fitzgerald and Felicity Callard, ‘Entangling the Medical Humanities’, *Edinburgh Companion to the Critical Medical Humanities* 2016, 5)

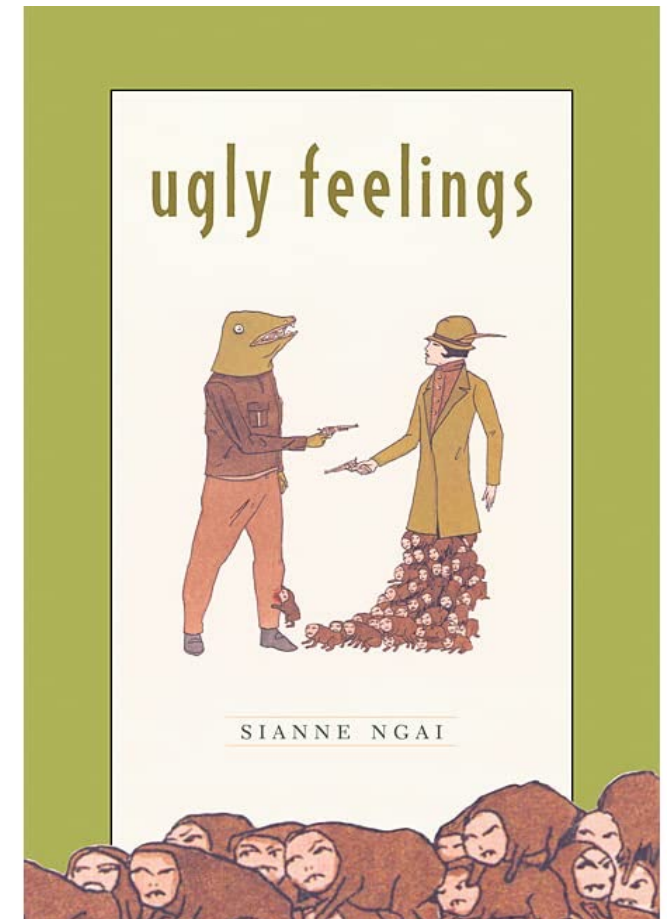
- A ‘dynamic of entanglement’ rather than a push towards integration’

- ‘We have tried to conjure a different palette of affective dispositions through which we might [...] live in interdisciplinary spaces. Those dispositions (eddy around ambivalence, awkwardness, frustration, failure and so on) depart from the most common affective registers (critique, adulation, disinterested rigour) through which [many] have tended to approach the terrain of the medical, clinical or biomedical. We want resolutely to claim the stance of interestedness. But we also see interest as a stance that can be (indeed usually is) taken up without someone quite knowing the place at which they stand, or the entwinements through which they are always-already bound with/in others [...]. So it is, to be entangled.’
(Fitzgerald and Callard, 5)

‘Ugly Feelings’: Affect Theory and the History of Emotions

- How the meaning/cultural currency of **feelings/emotions change over time**
 - Emotions as **shaped by cultural/political forces**
 - Representation of emotions in literature/film as **revealing of the power structures at work**
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- **‘Affect’** is used in different ways in different fields (neuroscience, psychology and literary/cultural studies)
 - Sara Ahmed, Lauren Berlant and Sianne Ngai – critics for whom affects are crucially connected to structures of power (social/cultural/political); also interested in how affective states **stretch our capacity to name them** but haven’t cut loose from language and cognition

Sianne Ngai (*Ugly Feelings* 2007), she’s interested in those feelings that are seen as unproductive/marginalised.



How might 'affect' speak to dysfluency?

- One of the hall-marks of affect is **'In-between-ness'**.
- '...the most fundamental insight of affect theory: that no embodied being is independent but rather is **affected by and affects others bodies**, profoundly and perpetually as a condition of being in the world'

(Stephen Ahern, 'Introduction', *A Feel for the Text*, 5)

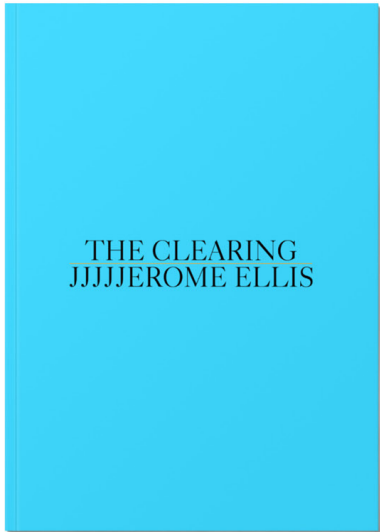
- 'The challenge for researchers is that affect is not something, but rather is **"in many ways synonymous with force or forces of encounter"**; rather than housed in or controlled by the individual, it **"arises in the midst of in-between-ness"**: in the capacities to act and be acted upon'.

(Ahern 8, citing Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, *The Affect Reader* 2010).

- 'Affect' as **dynamic** – emotions not static but in process – changing as they move between bodies.
- Robert Solomon recommended 'thinking of emotions as acts', as 'something we do, not just have'.
- 'Affect' captures maybe better than emotion that **embodied aspect of experience** (something felt before it's understood).



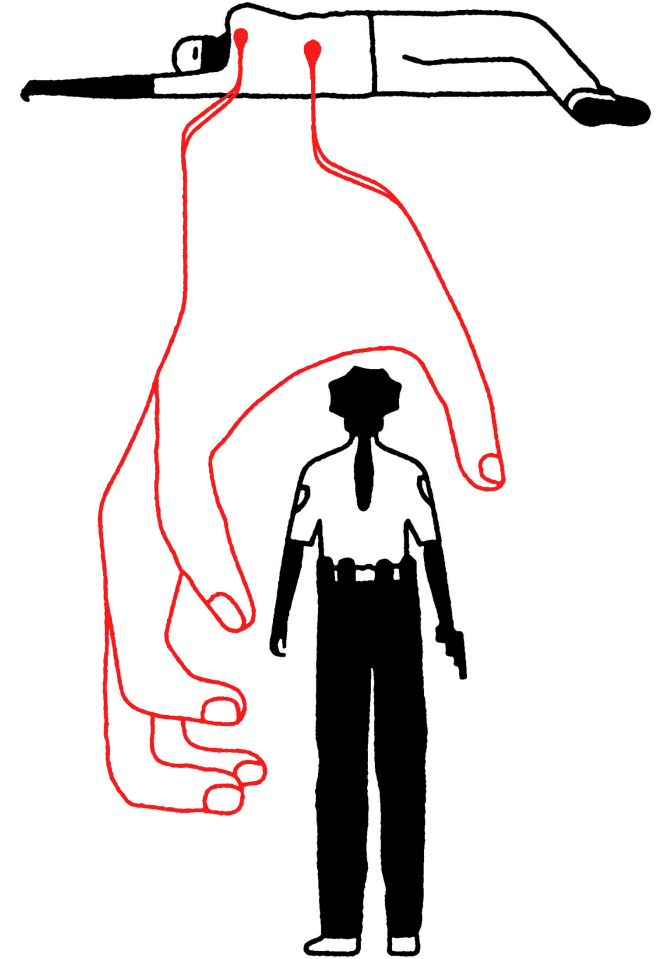
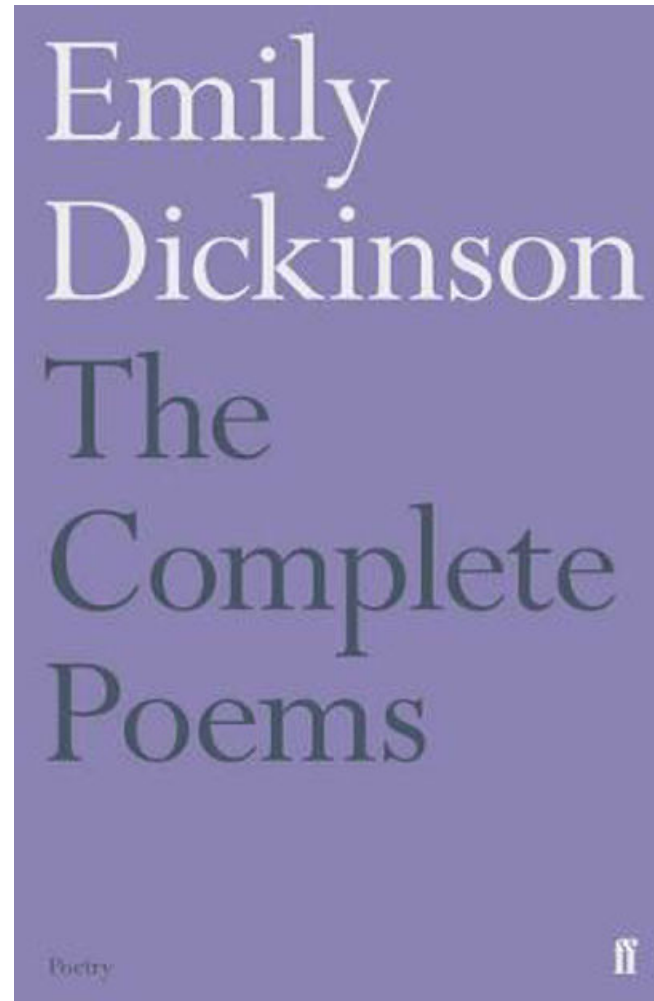
Two black vinyl records are shown, one slightly behind and to the right of the other. Both records have a bright blue center label. The records are set against a plain white background.

J.J. JEROME
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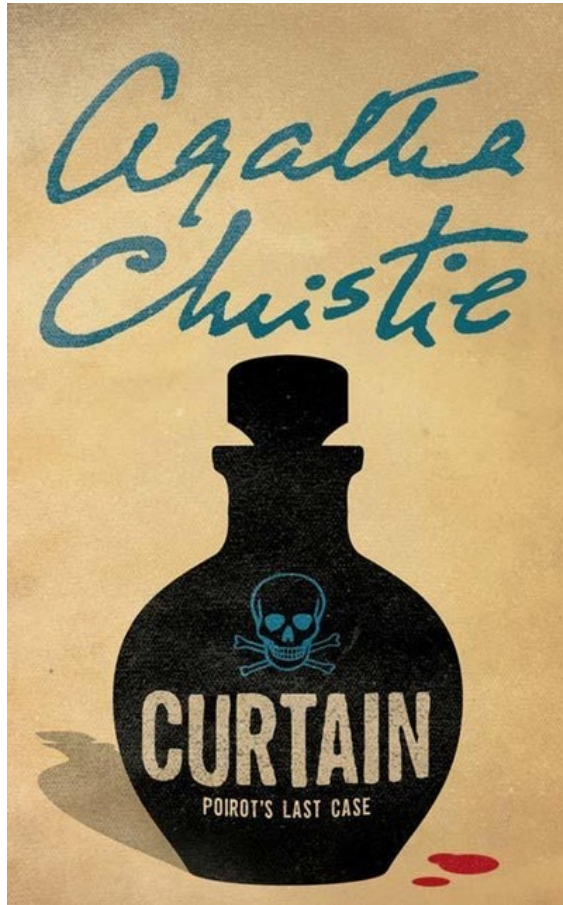
The Voice(s) of the Text

Interested Reading: reading **with and for** the stammer

- **19th c American writing:** Emily Dickinson
- **Popular Culture: Crime Fiction and Film/Television**
- 'Criminal' Voices
- The '**cultural work**' of the text (literary/cinematic) – much of that 'cultural work' through affect?



Curtain, Poirot's Last Case (Agatha Christie 1940; pub.1975)



ITV Adaptation
2013

Hercule Poirot : I pity you, Norton... how very sad to find that this great and beautiful world is so foul and disappointing. And your mother, I pity even more.

Stephen Norton : M-my m-m-mother? You pity my mother?

Hercule Poirot : To endure the agony of bringing you forth only to discover that she had nurtured in her loins such wickedness - is that not worthy of pity?

Stephen Norton : It is you who is n-not worthy! She m-m-meant the world to m-me!

Hercule Poirot : And you to her?

Stephen Norton : She I-loved me... I-loved me m-m-more than... m-more than...

Hercule Poirot : Did she ever hold you, Norton, as mothers do? Stroke your hair... kiss your cheek?

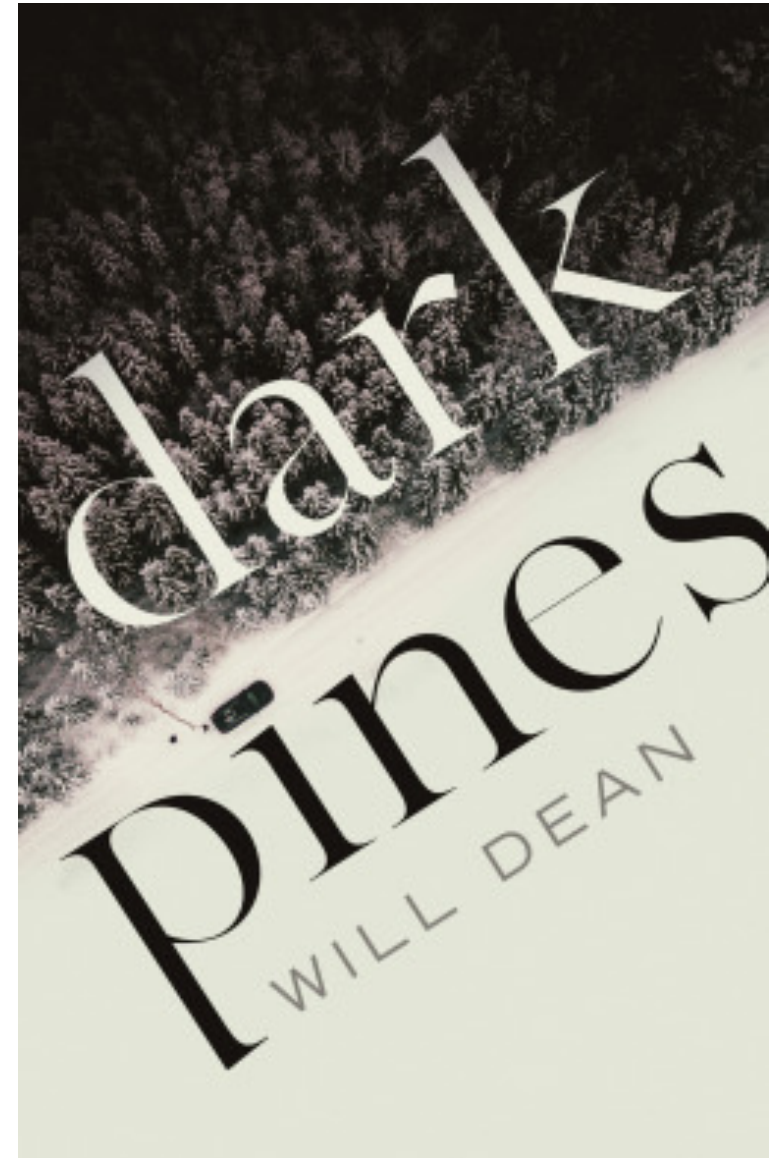
Stephen Norton : She... she... she...

Hercule Poirot : Scared you, did she not? She pushed you away!

Changing Affects



Edward Norton in *Primal Fear* (1996)



Tuva Moodyson *Mysteries* (2018)

The Dysfluent Reader?

They won't frown always — some sweet
Day

When I forget to tease —

They'll recollect how cold I looked

And how I just said "Please."

Then They will hasten to the Door

To call the little Girl

Who cannot thank Them for the Ice

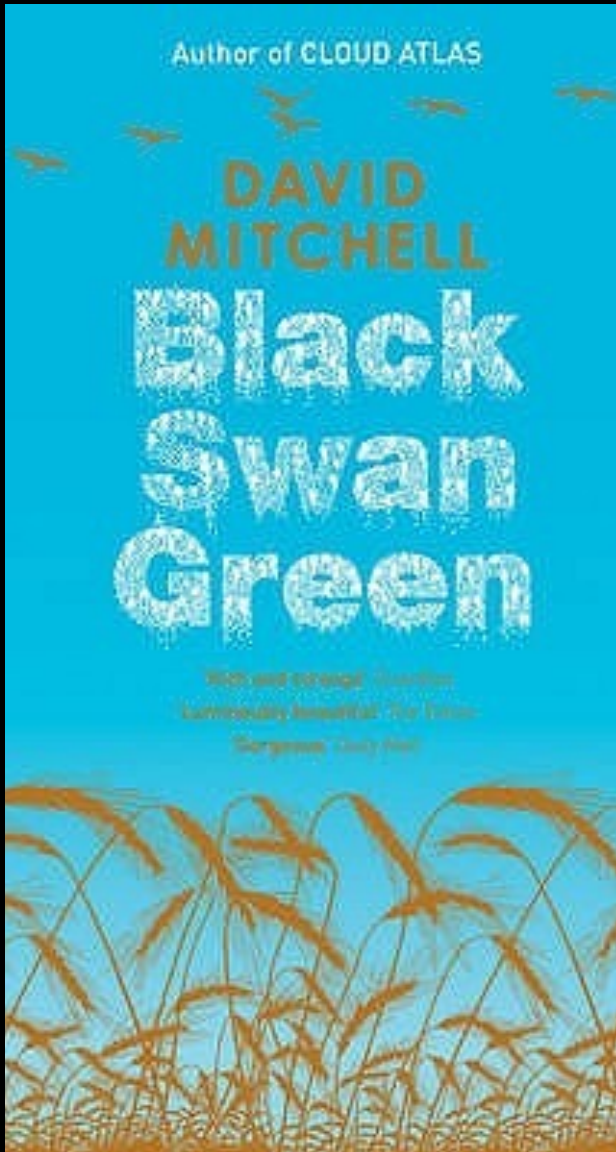
That filled the lipping full

(Fr 923, c.1865)



*Springs - shake the Sills -
But the Echoes - stiffen -
Hear - is the window - and
numb - the Year -
Tides of Eclipse - in Vento
of Marble -
Staples of Ages - have
buckled ! then -*

*+ Risk + suggest - Gist -
stutter + place + die -
+ thrust + the + she
+ could reach + hold + unper-
+ mitted + seraphic gain -
One gets -*



New Narratives and Dysfluency 'Banks'?

- What kinds of 'narratives'/voices do we want?
- Resistance to narratives of recovery/overcoming
- Narratives of the non-linear, the messy, the entangled?

