

Special Issue “Affective Lives: Autotheoretical Experiments”

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This Special Issue of *Passion* – the open-access journal of the European Philosophical Society for the Study of Emotions (EPSSE) – provides a platform for creative autotheoretical explorations of various affective phenomena and conditions.

Memoir and autotheory have always been central to writings from marginalized perspectives. Examples include the works of W.E.B. Du Bois, Zora Neale Hurston, Frantz Fanon, Simone de Beauvoir, and Jean Améry. More recent examples include the writings by Annie Ernaux, Édouard Louis, and Didier Eribon, as well as Susan Brison’s “Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of the Self,” and Ann Cvetkovich’s “Depression: A Public Feeling.” As Lauren Fournier explains in her book “Autotheory as Feminist Practice in Art, Writing, and Criticism,” autotheory integrates so-called subjective modes of writing and presentation, such as autobiography and memoir, with theory and philosophy. It often does so in a performative way, committed to the aim of social criticism. As such, autotheory is unique in that it allows for the exploration of lived experiences – particularly of suffering and marginalization – through an autobiographical lens, while simultaneously acknowledging and uncovering social structures underlying these experiences that render them not just personal but also profoundly social and political.

Despite its impact on decolonial, feminist, and queer writing, the methods of memoir and autotheory have remained at the margins of academic philosophical writing. While they have gained more attention in mainstream philosophy in recent years, most writing and discourse remain detached and impersonal. This is also true within the philosophy of emotion. While interest in affective phenomena is often grounded in our lived and embodied experience, the philosophy of emotion is still frequently practiced and presented in a seemingly detached and impersonal way.

Not so in this Special Issue that invites you to take seriously the personal, embodied, social, political, and performative nature of our affective lives. Committed to anti-oppressive and liberatory ideals, it offers both new and established voices a creative space to explore affective lives through an autotheoretical lens that integrates the personal with the theoretical.

- 1) *In terms of form*, all contributions should employ autotheoretical methods and modes of presentation; this is a collection of autotheoretical essays, not of essays about autotheory. Taking seriously the critical and explorative nature of autotheory, this Special Issue offers you the creative freedom to experiment with new forms of expression.
- 2) *In terms of content*, the Special Issue seeks to do justice to our affective lives in all their plurality, variety, and ambiguity, acknowledging the violence, cruelty, and injustices of our world while also celebrating life’s fragile pleasures, joys, and beauties.

Timeline

1. **Expressions of interest and abstracts:** I plan to organize an online workshop (in October 2025) where drafts can be presented and discussed. Please indicate your interest in contributing to the Special Issue by **the end of April 2025** by submitting:
 - a. An abstract of no more than 500 words;
 - b. A brief, informal description of your background and/or interest in autotheory;
 - c. Whether you are interested in contributing to and participating in the online workshop.
2. **Full papers** (maximum 9,000 words) are due by **the end of January 2026**; they will undergo a blind peer-review procedure (for details, see [here](#)). Note that it is also possible to submit a full paper without having expressed prior interest.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions. The more passion, the better.