

## CONVENORS

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# READING AND STUDYING NARRATIVES OF TRAUMA, CRISIS, AND ILLNESS

2-3 OCTOBER 2023

Follow-up event on 26 January 2024, 10:00-11:30 am

Lecture by Annika Mörte Alling (HiØ):  
„The Role of Emotions in Literature Classes, or Why Are There  
No Tears in the University Corridors?”

[https://hiof.zoom.us/j/68925681118?](https://hiof.zoom.us/j/68925681118?pwd=a1M2R01iUFJyWVh2ZGJHcXQ5eDh5Zz09)  
pwd=a1M2R01iUFJyWVh2ZGJHcXQ5eDh5Zz09

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### **The Role of Emotions in Literature Classes, or Why Are There No Tears in the University Corridors?**

The role of emotions and of affective engagement in our relation to literature is a research area in rapid evolution since the "affective turn" at the beginning of the 21st century, thanks to scholars like Rita Felski (e.g. 2008, 2015, 2020), Patrick Colm Hogan (2011, 2018), Suzanne Keen (2007), Martha Nussbaum (2001), Jenefer Robinson (2005) and Jean-François Vernay (2013, 2016).

Notwithstanding, there still seems to be little room for emotion in literature courses at the university today, and in the academic world in general, as Rita Felski stresses. Why is that, despite all the research pointing to the absolute necessity of emotional attachment in literary studies, there are no tears in the university corridors?

This subject will be central in my talk. If it is a matter of lack of time and space in the courses, how can we circumvent these challenges? And how can we meet the objection that emotional responses are not possible to evaluate in exams? How do we create a balance between a more subjective approach and the always also necessary distanced and critical reading? To go even further, how do we make experiences of passion and attachment for literature become a part of the knowledge that we want to transmit to our students?

Thus, my talk will try to relate theory to practical questions. The empirical point of departure will be observations made in the teaching situation, based on oral and textual productions by university students of French literature at Østfold University College.

### **Short bio**

Annika Mörte Alling is Associate Professor of French literature, PhD in 2003, researcher and teacher at Lund University 1995-2020, from 2021 at Østfold University College. Research interests are the French nineteenth-century novel (e.g. Stendhal, Balzac, Flaubert) the role and function of literature, the role of emotions in literature and teaching, mimetic desire and space/place in literature.

2016-2021 active within the research programme "Cosmopolitan and Vernacular Dynamics in World Literatures" (worldlit.se), where she has been coeditor of two anthologies, the last one recently published by Bloomsbury: *Literature and the Making of the World: Cosmopolitan Texts, Vernacular Practices* (2022). Her chapter treats images of Paris in novels by Balzac and Flaubert. She has also published studies on the translation and reception of French literature in Sweden in the nineteenth century, the "bovaryism" of Jules de Gaultier, endings in Balzac and mimetic desire in the novels of Stendhal and Balzac.

### **Recent publications**

Mörte Alling, Annika. "The Making of Paris in Novels by Balzac and Flaubert" (p. 149-183). In: *Literature and the Making of the World. Cosmopolitan Texts, Vernacular Practices*. Ed. Annika Mörte Alling, Helena Bodin, Stefan Helgesson. Bloomsbury Academic, 2022, New York, London, Oxford, 2020.  
[0.5040/9781501374180.ch-4](https://doi.org/10.5040/9781501374180.ch-4)

Mörte Alling, Annika. « On oublie trop souvent de faire vivre les textes littéraires » : Entretien avec Jean-François Vernay. À propos de *La séduction de la fiction*, Paris, Hermann, 2019. Propos recueillis par Annika Mörte Alling. *Cahiers de narratologie*, 2022. Nr 42.  
<https://doi.org/10.4000/narratologie.14019>