

Daniel M. Gross, *The Secret History of Emotion: From Aristotle's Rhetoric to Modern Brain Science* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006).

The Secret History of Emotion: From Aristotle's Rhetoric to Modern Brain Science is a classic work in rhetorical studies, and a foundational work in the field of Affect & Emotion Studies. In the book, Gross develops the compelling argument that emotions are not biological but rather are *rhetorical*. Why, Gross poses, did Princess Diana's death provoke global mourning while the death of an un-housed person is most often met with apathy? His answer takes his readers across an expansive rhetorical and literary tradition to provide a history that denaturalizes emotions as biologically adaptive mechanisms – the dominant perspective now most famously argued by the cognitive neuroscientist Antonio Damasio. By way of contrast, Gross's critical reading of Aristotle, Seneca, Thomas Hobbes, David Hume, Sarah Fielding, and Judith Butler provides an spacious terrain through which to explore how emotions are unevenly distributed across power lines, thus displacing psychophysiology's triumph. Subject and psyche thus take a new form in Gross's work, as he shows how power relations circumscribe the social boundaries through which feeling travels. By relocating emotion this way, the book marks a victory for the humanities, reclaiming for critical rhetoric the compelling category of emotion from its current security in the sciences.

In terms of its home academic field, *The Secret History of Emotion* has been credited, amongst other things, for shifting academic attention away from “the rhetoric of figures and tropes” back to a more substantial tradition: “the rhetoric of the passions.” At the same time, the book serves as a powerful rejoinder to currently dominant ways of researching basic human activity. It does so – perhaps surprisingly – by revitalizing an ancient tradition of rhetoric that turns out to be more intelligent and nuanced than most late modern accounts. Particularly influential has been the historical argument that demonstrates in detail how European early modernity saw emotions that were once political, like anger, fear, and compassion, “sucked up into the brain.” Offering this new history and inspiring a new cross-disciplinary method, the book has been highly influential across the Academy and beyond. It is regularly cited across the humanities, social sciences, and in the professions – in over 50 academic fields and counting. At the same time, it has been reviewed and discussed across the globe and in numerous publications both academic and journalistic, including over twenty-six book reviews emanating from among other places the Russian Federation, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates.